

**OLD SLEUTH'S OWN.**

No. 16.

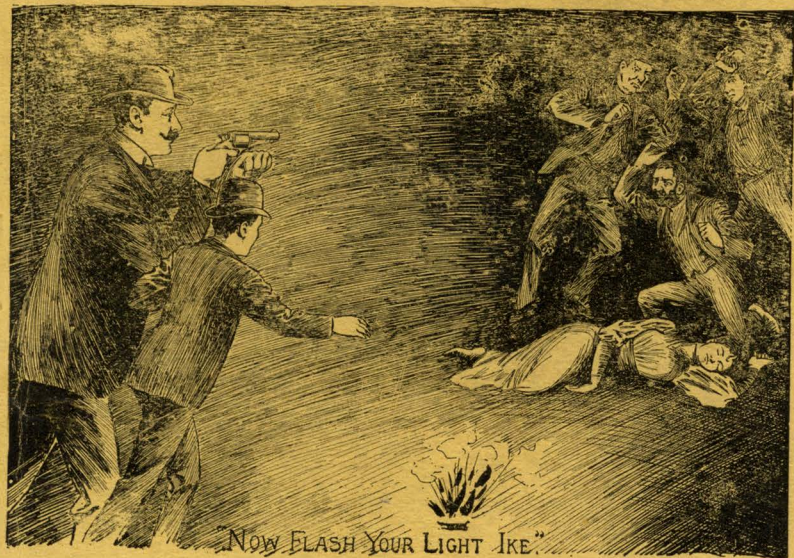
# A Straight-out Detective;

OR,

## New York Under a Flashlight.

A Tale of Masks, Devices and Flashes.

**By OLD SLEUTH.**



"NOW FLASH YOUR LIGHT IKE."

NEW YORK:  
J. S. OGILVIE PUBLISHING COMPANY,  
57 ROSE STREET.

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# A STRAIGHT-OUT DETECTIVE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### A THRILLING ADVENTURE.

"Now flash, Ike."

As the command came a bright light suddenly illumined a dark underground apartment, revealing a very startling tableau. A lad had flashed the light, and when the illumination came a man was revealed holding a pair of cocked revolvers in his hands. On the floor lay a beautiful girl, apparently dead, and cowering behind her were two desperate-looking men, while a third stood in one corner with a weapon in his hand.

Here followed a thrilling scene. But before relating what occurred at that critical moment we will relate to our readers the series of startling and romantic incidents which led up to the event above described.

Some weeks previously Detective Murray, one of the most straightforward, daring detectives who ever tracked a criminal, received a very curious letter, which ran as follows:

"MR. MURRAY.

"DEAR SIR: Will you please call at No. 16 — street, top flat, rear room, and meet one who will make a strange and remarkable revelation to you. Come secretly; let no one see you; and please call after ten o'clock at night. Ask for Miss Dean.

Yours confidentially,

"MISS DEAN."

The detective read and re-read the letter. It was a very tempting bait for a detective officer, a very tempting bait indeed, and especially so at that particular juncture, as the great officer was temporarily idle and ready to take up anything that offered. On the contrary there were reasons why it was necessary that he should be very careful. He had many sworn enemies. He knew of one very desperate character who had openly sworn to down him, and he was aware that the man had just gotten out of state prison. There were other desperate criminals who "had it in for him," as the saying goes, and a note similar to the one he had received might be merely a decoy.

Murray proceeded to the house indicated and learned that it was a new flat in a newly built-up quarter of the city, near the river, and in order to reach there he would be compelled to cross several vacant lots, and pass down a very questionable locality. He recognized that the flat part of it might be merely a "guy" to draw him down by the rocks, from which an enemy might shoot him down and escape without ever being recognized.

As he went over the ground he became more and more impressed with the suspicion that it was intended to lay him out. A better place for such a game could not have been selected; the assassin, as intimated, could shoot from the rocks, run across to the adjoining street, then to the river, and get away with perfect ease.

Having gone over the ground and studied the part of

the possible game indicated, the detective made a careful reconnaissance of the house. It was a new flat, only occupied by a few families, and as far as he could learn they were a reasonably nice class of people. While watching he saw a lad come from the flat. He hailed the boy and asked:

"Do you live in that house?"

"Yes, I do."

"How long have you lived there?"

"Over a month."

"Did a young lady named Dean move in there lately?"

"No."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"Is there a young lady living there all alone?"

"No."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, I am."

"No young lady of any name lives there on the top floor, rear room?"

"No."

"Now, see here, why do you want to tell stories?"

"I don't want to tell stories."

"But there is a lady living there."

"I say there ain't; no one lives on the top flat."

"How about the flat next to the top?"

"No one lives there either."

"You are a funny boy."

"Why?"

"To tell me that."

"I am telling you the truth."

"Really?"

"Yes; what object would I have in telling a lie?"

"None."

"Well, I am telling you the truth."

"No one lives on the top flat?"



"No."

"And no one on the flat under the top flat?"

"No."

"I reckon I've got the wrong house."

"I reckon you have, for there is no young lady in the building at all. There is one little girl about twelve, and she is my sister, and we live on the second flat up. No one lives in any of the flats above us yet, although I've heard a family is to move in."

"When?"

"I don't know when. I just heard one of the flats was let. I do not know which one."

The detective walked away. He was fully convinced the lad had told the truth, and that his original suspicion was correct, and that it was a scheme to decoy him down to that neighborhood and murder him from the rocks.

As Murray thought the matter over he remarked:

"All right, my friend, you shall have a chance, maybe; at any rate I will be down your way to-night at a little before ten o'clock, and the chances are you may find out you cannot catch a weasel asleep. Oh, no!"

The detective returned home and made his arrangements for capturing his would-be assassin. Some of our readers will recognize Detective Murray, the bright, dashing officer who was such a friend on several occasions to the odd and persevering Nimble Ike, whose adventures we have related in previous narratives. Murray met Ike and showed him the letter and stated what he suspected, and also announced the result of his investigations. Nimble Ike listened attentively, and finally said, with a peculiar intonation:

"So you intend to down this fellow instead of letting him down you?"

"Yes, I do."

"A good scheme to be on the safe side."

There was a peculiar and unreadable expression on Ike's face as he spoke.

"You have an idea, Ike."

"Yes, I'd be sorry to be accused of never having an idea."

"What is in your head?"

"All I ever knew I've got yet."

"But what do you think?"

"I think you are doing the right thing."

"Honest Injun?"

"Yes, and now what is your plan?"

"I intend to put out skirmishers and take these assassins flank and rear."

"A good scheme."

"I will need you."

"I will be on deck."

"All right; to-night, well armed, at the time named I will be around."

"Good enough; you can count on me."

At the time named two men and a lad met at a certain corner; the lad was our daring and tricky little friend, Nimble Ike; the men were Detective Murray and his friend, a fellow detective.

Their plan of campaign had been arranged, and they started. Ike, well armed and fully on his guard, was to go in advance, hide in the rocks and "lay low," to learn if any suspicious characters showed up. Murray's detective friend was also to lay off in the vicinity with his eyes open, and at a given time Murray was to walk down toward the flat. Everything was arranged to go off like clockwork. Signals were fixed up, including magnesium cartridges for explosion and the production of a flash-light. Nimble Ike, as our readers know, was a great genius in the manufacture of all manner of contrivances, and he had the magnesium flash-lights down to perfection.

Nimble Ike took his position about nine o'clock, an hour ahead of the time appointed, and he had his eyes and ears open to see and to hear anything that might occur; the other detective also assumed his position, and there both lay on the alert.

Ten o'clock struck and Murray looked out for signals. He did not receive any at first, but after a little did receive, not a flash-light signal, but a bird-call notification that the road was clear. Ike and his aid had covered the whole ground where there was any possibility for the working of a surprise attack.

The moment Murray received his signal or safety notification he proceeded along down the street, going the route any man would naturally go. He wished to reach his objective point in the most convenient manner, and as one who was devoid of any suspicion Murray passed along in safety and arrived in front of the flat, and there he waited, and a few moments later was joined by Ike and his detective friend.

"You fellows did not see anything?"

"Nothing."

"It's strange."

"Nothing strange about it," said Ike.

"How so?"

"You were mistaken, that's all."

"Mistaken about what?"

"There is no put-up job."

"But there is no girl in the house?"

"How do you know?"

"I told you what the boy said."

"Do you accept that as final?"

"No use to go in if there is no girl in the house."

"I'll go," said Ike; "I'll play Detective Murray."

"Ike, you appear to think there is something in it."

"Certainly, I've thought so all along, and that is what



I have had in my head, along with other ideas, from the first.

"A job may be intended in the flat."

"That's true; so you had better let me take in the interview, and then we will be on the safe side."

"How?"

"If they are seeking to drop Detective Murray they will not harm an innocent little boy like me."

"Ike, you're a teaser."

"Thank you."

"I'll go inside and learn what there is to it."

"That's right; I'll go with you, or rather I'll go in advance and feel the way."

"Go it."

It was arranged that the extra detective should remain outside on the watch while Ike and Murray entered the house. The two detectives, Ike and Murray, reached the top floor of the house, and Ike, who was in advance, said, as he pointed:

"See here."

"Great ginger!"

"We mustn't believe all we hear, captain."

"You're right, Ike."

"The boy lied."

"He did, for there is a light in the room, and he said the apartments were unoccupied."

"It is evident that there is some one in the rooms."

"Yes."

"And it is possible that your enemies may be there, and then again it is just possible the boy didn't lie. Miss Dean may have gone in there since you talked with the boy."

"There is but one way to settle it, Ike."

"You're right; follow instructions; I will wait here; if you strike anything suspicious, signal, and I will pass the

signal and join you; if I don't hear from you I will know everything is all right."

"Here goes, Ike."

"Let her go."

The detective advanced and knocked at the door. In a moment it was opened by a young lady, and Ike heard Murray ask:

"Is this Miss Dean?"

Instead of answering the lady demanded:

"Are you Detective Murray?"

"My question went out first, miss?"

"Ah! excuse me. Yes, I am Miss Dean."

"You sent for me?"

"If you are Detective Murray I did send you a note."

"I am Detective Murray."

"Please walk in."

Ike overheard the conversation, saw the detective enter and heard the door close behind him.

Upon entering the room Murray glanced around and saw that the girl had evidently but just moved in. He saw nothing that looked suspicious, and gave no signal, and realized that the lad had possibly told the truth, for he said:

"You have just moved in here, Miss Dean?"

"Yes, I got in this afternoon."

"And you did not reside here when you sent me the note?"

"No, but I knew I was coming here and I preferred to meet you here instead of at my old place of residence."

"Very well, miss, I am here. What can I do for you? What have you to tell me?"

"I have a strange and seemingly incredible tale to relate, and you must believe every word I tell you, no matter how strange my narrative may appear."

"I am prepared to listen to your narrative, or rather your promised revelation."

The detective had looked the girl over. She was not handsome, but a bright, wholesome-looking young lady, evidently not older than nineteen or twenty. She possessed an honest face and impressed him from the start as a very intelligent, brave, self-reliant young lady.

"I can have no motive in deceiving you, sir."

"Oh, certainly; but let me ask you one question: How is it you selected me as your confidant?"

"I read a notice of you in one of the daily papers; they were kind enough to say of you that you were one of the keenest and most persistent officers on the force, and that you were a thoroughly honest and reliable gentleman."

"That is all you know about me?"

"Yes, sir."

"All right. Tell me your story and I may possibly prove that I deserve all the nice things that have been said about me, and I may also prove myself worthy of your confidence, and also justify the wisdom of your selection."

"I do not doubt you for a minute; and now let me repeat, I am about to relate a very strange story, and in advance I desire to say and emphasize the statement, that I shall relate nothing but actual fact—every word I speak will be the truth and nothing but the truth, to the best of my knowledge."

"That's all right. I am prepared to believe all you tell me—that is, all the *facts* you may state to me. Your conclusions or deductions I shall question according to my judgment, but your facts I am, as I said, prepared to accept as true."

"Very well; now I will tell you my story."



## CHAPTER II.

## A TRULY STRANGE RECITAL.

"AS FAR as my own history is concerned it is simple enough. I am the daughter of a farmer up in the State of New York. I believe I have a talent for painting, and as my father is a gentleman of fairly good means he decided to let me come to the city for one winter and go under regular instructions. I started for New York alone. You see I am of the independent sort. I would be willing to travel from here to Siberia, as far as courage is concerned, and my father knows I can take care of myself all right ordinarily, but when one believes she is the selected victim of a band of assassins, then it is an entirely different thing."

Odd thoughts and suspicions ran through the detective's mind as he listened, and mentally he concluded:

"She looks all right, but I've seen healthy-looking lunatics in my time. I wonder if this girl isn't one of them. The idea of her being pursued by a band of assassins looks pretty cranky, according to my mind."

The detective appeared to forget for the moment that he had just been dodging a supposed band of assassins himself, but he might say, "I have reason to look for enemies all right." He was to learn that the wholesome-looking young girl who was relating her experience also had reason to suspect assassination. When the girl stopped a moment the detective asked:

"Do you fear that a band of assassins are on your track?"

"I hardly know what to fear at present. All I know is that strange incidents are occurring and I propose to be on my guard."

"She's sensible enough," was the detective's final conclusion, and he said:

"Go on with your narrative. I am getting quite interested."

"Let me show you something," said Miss Dean.

"All right.

She drew from her bosom a card photograph and handed it to Murray; the detective glanced at the pictured face and an involuntary exclamation of delight fell from his lips. It was the portrait of a very beautiful girl.

"That is a beautiful face," said Miss Dean.

"Yes, it is the face of a very lovely young lady."

"And surrounding that young lady is a great mystery."

"You were telling me your story."

"Yes, but I desired to have you see that photograph, for the original of that card portrait figures largely in the tale I have to tell."

"I am now more deeply interested than ever in your narrative. Proceed."

"I said I boarded the train; I saw a vacant seat beside a young lady and took it. At the moment I did not notice the lady particularly. She had very little hand baggage, and after I sat beside her I observed that she was closely veiled, and later I discovered that she was regarding me very closely from under her veil, and as it appears she saw something in my face that encouraged her to address me, and she did so. She asked:

"'Are you going to the city?'"

"I answered that I was.

"'Alone?' came the question.

"'Yes, alone.'"

"'I am traveling to the city alone,' she said, and she added:

"'Have you ever been in New York before?'"

"I answered, 'No; this is my first visit.'"

"'You are going to the house of friends?'"

"'No.' I answered.

"'You have a place to go to, of course?'"

"'Certainly.'"

"'I haven't,' came the declaration.

"Mr. Murray," said Miss Dean, "I have been a great reader. I had read a great deal about New York life and the various devices resorted to by confidence people to rob strangers. I was on my guard and I made up my mind at once that the veiled stranger whose face I had not seen—for her veil was a heavy one—was a confidence woman. I am not conceited; I know I possess a plain face and look like a country girl and at once I discovered a disinclination for further talk, but the veiled lady appeared disposed to continue the conversation, and finally she asked:

"'Are you going to a boarding house?'"

"I answered 'no.'"

"'Then you are going to the house of a friend?'"

"I was annoyed, but answered:

"'I am going to the house of a friend—of a friend, that is all.'"

"'Does the party take other boarders?'"

"'Why do you ask?'"

"'I will be frank,' she said. I remained silent and at length in a very timid tone she asked:

"'Do you think it possible I could go to the same house where you are going, in case I pay my board?'"

"'I don't know,' I answered shortly, thoroughly convinced that I was talking to a confidence woman, and my manner appeared to silence her, but later I became aware that she was silently weeping and all my sympathies were aroused."

Thinking that he could anticipate what was to follow, the detective said:

"'Confidence people usually work through their victim's sympathies.'"



"Yes, I know that; but somehow I changed my mind concerning this girl, and I spoke to her. I asked:

"How is it you are going to New York alone and have no place to put up at?"

"I could give a good reason," she said.

"Why don't you?"

"Because you are a stranger to me."

"But you have asked a stranger to take you to her friend's house."

"Yes, only temporarily. But never mind, you distrust me, and I will do the best I can."

"If you will give me an explanation I will aid you, if I can," I said.

"Look at me!" suddenly exclaimed the veiled woman, or girl, as I discovered when she raised her veil. Yes, I beheld the beautiful and innocent face of the original of that photograph, and do you wonder that she won my confidence?"

"No, I do not wonder that she won your confidence, but I reckon that you have since learned that confidence people never look like confidence people. Why, Miss Dean, in my career as a detective I have run down many a beautiful, innocent-faced girl, for the most serious of crimes and oftentimes they are the most daring and adept criminals."

"I know all that and I knew it then, but that girl won my confidence from the moment I gazed on her face, and was prepared to take chances."

"And you did, and you've paid the penalty, I suppose."

"Do you?" Miss Dean spoke in a very peculiar tone. The detective remained silent and the narrator continued:

"I made no mistake. No, that unfortunate girl, so beautiful, so innocent, so true, still has all my sympathy and a large share of my love."

"You say unfortunate girl?"

"Yes."

"Proceed with your narrative."

"I determined on the moment to be her friend and do all for her that I could, and I said:

"I will arrange for you to go to the same house that I do and you may make arrangements to remain there as long as you choose."

"You are so kind," she said, and added:

"I will not trespass on your good nature and hospitality for any great length of time. I may not remain in New York."

"Will you tell me how it is you are going to New York alone?"

"Do not ask me. You are so kind I know you will spare me the recital of my story."

"You appear to be in trouble."

"I am in great trouble."

"I may be able to aid you in other ways," I said.

"No, you are giving me all the aid you can in permitting me to remain at your home until I can make other arrangements."

"I talked to the girl all the way to the city and several times sought to draw from her the reason for her strange flight, as I concluded her trip to be. She was persistent, however, in her refusal to reveal anything to me, and still unsatisfied as to her motive I arrived with her at the Grand Central depot. When the baggageman came around to collect the checks for baggage delivery I asked her for her check, when in a trembling voice she told me she had no baggage beyond the satchel which she had beside her. This confession confirmed the impression that for some reason she was a runaway.

"I had surrendered my baggage check and proposed to walk to the house where I was to abide when she asked:

"Can we not take a carriage?"

"We can," I said, "but I believe carriages are expensive and I know my friend does not live far from the depot."

"I will pay for the carriage," she said.

"It is a useless expenditure," I suggested, when she said:

"My safety may demand that I take a carriage. I do not mind; the money expense is nothing to me—only safety."

"Very well," I said, "we will take a carriage," and then she asked:

"Are you sure you can explain matters to your friend so as to induce her to receive me with you?"

"I will have no explanations to make. I am only to become a boarder. I will state that you are a friend and that you also need accommodations."

"It will be so nice if we can get adjoining rooms; do you know I have such confidence in you."

"I will try and get adjoining rooms," I said.

"In fact she had won my fullest confidence, and my curiosity was piqued. Her manners were charming and I noticed that her clothing was of the finest make and material; I had never worn clothes of such expensive materials, and strangely enough, although I had not been able to induce her to tell me her story, she had won mine from me, and so we arrived at the house where I was to reside for the winter, as I supposed; and we were fortunate enough to get adjoining rooms, with a door opening between us; and once in her room and under the full glare of the gaslight, for it was night before we arrived, I had a better chance to study her face and figure. In the cars she had kept her veil over her face, but when in our room she removed it, and I will here say that the photograph but suggests the real beauty of the girl whom I thus strangely met. Her figure was perfect in its proportions and gracefulness; indeed she is the most beautiful creature I ever met, and also the most charming and fascinating person under whose influence I ever fell. I stated that her clothes were rich and elegantly made, and I soon dis-



covered that she owned the most costly jewels, and I also learned that she had a large sum of money in cash with her."

Miss Dean stopped a moment and then resuming asked:

"Is it not a strange tale I am telling you?"

"Yes, it is a very strange tale. I am anxious to hear the denouement."

"The denouement is a very startling one."

"Did she make a display of her money and jewels?"

"No, I only had a glimpse of them by accident, but I have had a chance since to count the money and closely examine the jewels."

"That was when you became better acquainted with her?"

"No, the money and the jewels are in my possession now."

The detective's face assumed a very thoughtful expression and for a moment he made no comment. Finally Miss Dean asked:

"Why do you look so thoughtful?"

"I have reason to look very thoughtful."

"You are indulging some weird suspicion."

"It is hardly a suspicion; to my mind it is a dead certainty."

"I do not understand."

"You say you have perfect confidence in this beautiful girl."

"I have."

"And no suspicion has entered your mind?"

"No, sir."

"What is the young lady's name?"

"Rose Inness."

"She is very beautiful?"

"She is."

"And you remember what I told you—that some of the

most dangerous confidence women are both attractive and beautiful?"

"Yes, you said so."

"I fear——" the detective stopped short.

"Tell me what you fear."

"One moment. Just think over all the circumstances yourself; you are a very bright, shrewd girl."

"I have thought everything over many times."

"And no suspicion has yet entered your mind?"

"None whatever."

"Well, your beautiful friend, Rose Inness, in my opinion, is worse than a mere confidence woman. She is, I believe, a female criminal of the most dangerous sort."

"Your opinion does not shake my belief in her innocence."

"We will go over your story, incident by incident."

"All right."

"You met her on the cars?"

"Yes."

"She was veiled?"

"Yes."

"She appealed to you for assistance to secure her a hiding-place?"

"Yes."

"Everything indicated that she was a fugitive?"

"Yes."

"She refused to give you any information about herself?"

"She did."

"She was dressed handsomely?"

"She was."

"She had plenty of money?"

"Yes."

"She feared being seen? She would not even walk with you to your boarding house?"

"We did ride in a carriage."

"At her suggestion?"

"Yes."

"And at her expense?"

"Yes."

"And she admitted it would be dangerous to her to walk?"

"Yes."

"You have not told me yet, but I know the lady has disappeared."

"Yes, and I will tell you all about it."

"Yes, you shall conclude your narrative later on. Since her mysterious disappearance you have been followed by assassins."

"I have been followed by men who act in a very strange manner."

"And you believe those men are assassins?"

"I know I am very much alarmed."

"They are not assassins."

"You know them?"

"I know that they are detectives."

Madge Dean turned very pale.

"Detectives?" she repeated.

"Yes, detectives."

"Then you know something about the case?"

"Only what you have told me; but my long experience enables me to draw conclusions, and as I said, the young lady, Rose Inness, is undoubtedly a cunning criminal, and you are in great peril."

"I am in great peril?" again repeated Madge.

"Yes."

"From detectives?"

"Yes."

"Will you please tell me why I have reason to fear detectives?"

"You have stolen goods in your possession."



"I have stolen goods in my possession?" repeated Madge Dean in trembling tones.

"You have, most certainly."

"Why do you thus accuse me? Is it possible I am suspected of having anything to do with the disappearance of Rose? Do you, sir, believe I am a criminal?"

"No; I believe you are the victim of a criminal."

"The victim of a criminal?" again the girl repeated.

"Yes," answered the detective; and there came a settled expression to his face as he said:

"You appear to be dazed and I will fully explain to you."

"Please do so."

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## CHAPTER III.

### A DETECTIVE'S STRANGE EXPLANATION.

"I HAVE listened to your story," said Murray; "I have revolved the whole matter in my mind and I am convinced that you are the dupe of a beautiful and singularly expert criminal. The so-called Rose Inness evidently is a thief. She had stolen goods with her when she met you on the train. She realized how easy it would be to win your confidence. She also appreciated that in seeking an asylum with you she would throw her pursuers off the track, and it is evident that she has been run down. She discovered in time that the officers were crowding down on her and she has skipped, leaving the stolen goods on your hands. The men you believe to be assassins are really detectives, and at any moment they are liable to pounce down on you and find the stolen goods in your possession."

"I can explain how they came into my possession."

"Yes; but, my good girl, your story is an extraordinary one; you will be compelled to prove it."

"Prove it?"

"Yes."

"I can swear to its truth."

"No doubt; but that will not count. You must prove your statements, and there is but one way that you can do so."

"Name the way."

"You will have to produce Rose Inness. If your story is true that woman has played a very cunning trick on you. She has put you in a position to suffer the consequences of her crime, so that she can escape."

Madge Dean looked really handsome as a look of alarm and thoughtfulness settled upon her honest face, and after a moment she said:

"You appear to doubt my story."

"Why do you say that?"

"You said, 'if my story was true.'"

"That is a mere professional mode of speech."

"Do you believe my story is true?"

"Yes, I believe your story is true."

"Can I not make the other officers believe my story?"

"I do not think you can without absolute proofs. With them it will be all business and no sentiment; they will require absolute proof."

"But they were running down the real criminal, you say."

"That is true."

"They must know her identity."

"That may be true or it may not be true; it depends upon the circumstances under which they fell to her trail, and then again they may class you as a confederate."

"Can you advise me what to do?"

"I must have time to think the matter over."

"And in the meantime what shall I do with the money and the jewels?"

"Is there a large sum of money?"

"I never counted it; I believe there is a large amount of money."

"And the jewels are very valuable?"

"I believe they are very valuable."

"Would you trust the money and jewels with me?"

"Certainly."

"Produce the jewels."

Madge went to a large trunk, opened it and brought forth a fair-sized satchel. She unclasped it and the detective beheld a compartment packed with bills.

"We will count the money," he said.

"Do as you think best; but see, here are the jewels."

The detective was really dazzled by the display of rare and precious stones.

"They are indeed of great value," he said; and after a moment he added:

"If your story is true it is indeed fortunate that you sent for me."

"You still doubt my story?"

"No, I do not as a man, but professionally I must doubt your story, and I will prove its truth and save you in the end against all consequences; but you must not be caught with this treasure in your possession."

"You can take it away."

Upon counting the money the detective learned that there was sixty thousand dollars in money. A majority of the bills were of large denomination. The jewels, of course, he could not estimate upon, but he said:

"The beautiful thief certainly made a rich haul. Every possible means will be used to recover this 'swag,' and its great amount makes your position more perilous. We must act very quickly; if you are once arrested it will be



bad; before the law stories and statements are not accepted; everything must be proven; yes, proven beyond all question."

"You are satisfied, then, that Rose Inness is a thief?"

"I am."

Madge was thoughtful a moment, and then said:

"I am equally certain that she is not a thief. I am positively assured of her innocence, and I can advance very subtle arguments in favor of my faith in her, and besides I know she is an innocent girl—as innocent as she is beautiful."

"Will you advance one argument?"

"I will."

"Do so."

"If those men are detectives why didn't they capture her and secure the 'swag,' as you call it? If they are detectives why didn't they arrest me? They pursued me, actually 'shadowed' me, but they have not arrested me."

"Under some circumstances your argument might raise a question, but there is something very mysterious about this robbery, as will be developed, and their reason will be explained why they did not act as you suggest; but I will get at the bottom of the mystery, and I desire that you tell me where you resided before you came here."

"I am willing to tell you everything. I have nothing to conceal. I am only hiding from those men who are pursuing me—no one else."

"Those men, you can rest assured, are detectives, and they will not harm you unless they are convinced that you are a confederate of the thief, Rose Inness."

"Please speak of her as Rose—not as a thief."

"You still believe in her innocence?"

"I do."

"It is natural. She has evidently bewitched you."

"She did not bewitch me. I am not one that can be

**bewitched.** You will learn that I am very level-headed and brave."

Madge Dean proceeded and finished her story. She told how she and Rose had resided for a few days only at the boarding house when the latter proposed that they should hire a room. Rose furnished the money to furnish it and they had lived in peace and quiet for several weeks. Indeed Rose became quite cheerful, but never confidential as concerned the mystery of her previous life and the causes that led to her becoming a fugitive, and she determined to take lessons with Madge, and the girls went to lectures and the theater and finally Rose ventured out alone, and one morning she went away intending to do a little shopping; indeed she had stated her intention of making Madge a present. She never returned and it was shortly after her disappearance that Madge discovered that men were following her. She became greatly alarmed and finally determined to change her residence. She proceeded to secure new rooms and then wrote to the detective and held the interview, as it has been related to our readers.

Detective Murray had his own ideas after listening to all the details, and after a long talk he arranged with Madge to meet her again in two days, and he added:

"In the meantime I would advise you to remain in the house; do not go forth until I meet you again. You may have succeeded in dodging the men who are on your track, but I need a little time to pipe them, and also to cast around for other information. When I see you again I may have something important to say to you. This photograph will be of great assistance to me."

The detective at length bade Madge good-night and going forth joined his friend, Nimble Ike.

Those of our readers who have read our former narratives will remember that Detective Murray had been a warm friend of Ike Albro, and he had availed himself

many times of Ike's remarkable gifts, and had made many successful captures. In fact the two had become, as it were, sort of partners or pals. Murray had great confidence in Ike and relied largely upon him.

Nimble Ike, our hero, was, as our title indicates, a straight-out detective. Murray related to Ike all the circumstances as they had been told to him by Madge and when he had concluded he said:

"It's a remarkable case, Ike. It has been a confidence robbery. I have the 'swag' and I shall hold it until the affair is all cleared up."

The two had proceeded to Murray's lodgings and Ike sitting down said:

"You have a photograph of the thief?"

"Yes."

"Let me see it."

Murray handed the picture to Ike; the latter scanned it critically and there came a thoughtful look to his face, but he made no remark.

"What do you think of her picture, Ike? She is a beautiful criminal."

"Yes, it is the picture of a beautiful face. What sort of a face has the girl Madge?"

The detective described the appearance of Madge Dean.

"What do you think of her?"

"She is an honest girl, but I shall identify her all the same."

"And this is a photograph of the thief?"

"Yes."

"Captain, it is a greater mystery than you think. You never had a more complicated case to work out."

"You think so?"

"I do."

"Well, Ike, it is a simple case."

"It is?"



"Yes."

"We differ."

"In which direction?"

"We don't agree."

"We don't?"

"No."

"Where do we differ?"

"You say Rose Inness is a thief?"

"Yes."

"Have you proof?"

"No absolute proof beyond the indications; they are almost absolute."

"I don't agree with you. I am in agreement with Miss Dean."

"You are?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Rose Inness is not a thief. If either of them is a criminal it is Madge Dean. I would be sure she was a criminal if she had not surrendered to you the 'swag,' but—" Ike stopped short.

"Go on," said Murray.

"There may be a game under that."

"A game."

"Yes."

"What game could there be?"

"She may have only surrendered to you a part of the 'swag.' If that is true it is a great game of cunning; some of the women are very cute, you know, very."

"Yes, I know that; but, Ike, you are bewitched."

"Am I?"

"Yes."

"By what?"

"That picture."

"Oh, you think so?"

"I do."

"I'll wager you all I've ever accumulated, cap, that Rose Inness is an innocent girl."

"If your conclusions are correct, Ike, it is indeed a mysterious case."

"It is a mysterious case. I tell you the most mysterious case you ever had on hand, but we have a straight road to verification of some matters."

"Yes."

"What is your plan?" asked Ike.

"We will first learn who Madge Dean is, then verify her statements concerning herself."

"That you can easily do."

"Yes, and then we will work a double shadow on the detectives who are evidently on Miss Dean's trail."

"I see you still adhere to the theory that Rose Inness is a thief."

"I do."

"Stick to it, cap—but a surprise awaits you, that's all. I will admit that any straight-out detective would arrive at your conclusion, but I figure from different data. I tell you Rose Inness is not a thief, and what is more I believe she has been abducted. I fear some harm has come to her. We will go fast but sure, and within a few hours we will strike some startling discoveries, mark my words."

On the day following Murray took an early train for the town where Madge Dean had told him her home was located. He arrived in due time, and soon in the most positive manner assured himself that she had told the truth as concerned herself. He verified every statement she had made, even to the day and hour when she started for the city of New York. He indeed trailed to every incident, except to her meeting with Rose Inness. Ike, in the meantime, had followed the story in New York. He succeeded in learning that Madge and Rose had arrived at the

boarding house just as the girl had stated. He trailed to where they had started to keep house, and there, of course, his quest ended. He could go no further. At midnight Murray returned. The two met in the detective's room by agreement, and Ike asked:

"Well, captain, what did you make out?"

"I verified Miss Dean's narrative concerning herself to the letter. How did you make out?"

"I succeeded as well as you did. The two girls did arrive at the boarding house as she stated to you; they remained there a few days and then started in to keep house. Every word that she told you as concerned that end of it was the truth."

"Then you are convinced that Miss Dean is not a criminal."

"I am not so convinced."

"You are not."

"No."

"You are set in your opinions, lad."

"No; but I am not going to be thrown off and side-tracked by false conclusions. There is a mystery about Rose. Madge may have been honest until she may have been tempted. She is evidently a very smart girl, cap. It is possible a murder has been committed; startling as the proposition may appear it is just possible I am correct. We will have to investigate; I do not say it is true; I say it is possible, under any circumstances. I once more repeat, we have struck a very strange and complicated case."

On the following day the detective called upon Madge Dean, and he said to her:

"I thought I might have a revelation for you, but I am still in the dark. Answer me: have you any intimation that the detectives are on your track?"

"Yes, sir; and I have been terrorized almost to madness."

"Then they have run you down?"



"They have."

"Miss Dean, we will look after them now. You need fear nothing. We will set in to solve this mystery."

"Are you satisfied now that I told you the truth?"

"I am."

"Then you have verified my statements."

"You are a very shrewd girl."

"Not necessarily, because I discerned that you would verify my statements. I expected as a matter of course that you would; no other course was left to you, and now, sir, let me say one word more—you have just admitted that I am a shrewd girl; accepting your testimony, I desire to advise that you discard the suspicion that Rose Inness is a thief; if you proceed on that theory you will balk your own game."

"Advise me still further: What would you recommend me to do?"

"You are a shrewd, brave man."

"Ah! you are getting complimentary now."

"I am not dealing in mere compliments. I merely wish to make that admission in order to offer a suggestion."

"All right; I shall be glad to listen to your suggestion."

"The men who are following me know something concerning the abduction of Rose. Investigate them; no one can do it better than yourself. If I were a man I'd run them down quick enough."

"Your suggestion is a good one, and you can aid me in running down those men."

"I will aid you all I can. I will run any risks. Rose, if living, must be rescued, and from those men we may learn the true story concerning herself—the story she so persistently refused to tell."

"Yes, you are right there; and I repeat you can aid us; but it will require coolness and courage on your part."

"You can depend upon me for the display of both qualities."

"When did you see those men last?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"Where?"

"Walking past this house."

"Did they look up here as they passed?"

"There was but one man."

"Did he look up at your windows?"

"No."

"Are you sure of your recognition?"

"I am."

"You have not been out in the street?"

"No."

"All right; we will try our first trick; I wish to locate those men."

"You can easily do so. Wait here; one of them, I am sure, will show up."

"We will not wait for him; we will trail him."

"You wish me to go to the street?"

"Yes."

"And you will follow me?"

"I will."

"I see through your plan."

"And you feel strong enough to risk it?"

"I do. Knowing that you will be at hand, I will go anywhere you direct."

"All right. I will go forth; wait a full hour, and then proceed to the street. Act as you have always done since you have been aware that those men were on your track; look about furtively; act as though you were seeking to dodge some one, but do not dodge any one. Take a good walk. I will be at hand, and if any one starts on your track I will discover him. You will probably meet me when you least expect me. You will only know me by signal. I will teach you my signals and now, mark me well—if you receive that signal from one who looks like

the devil or Tom Walker, do not fear; it will be me or a representative, and you will know a friend is at hand, no matter what the guise of the party may be who gives you the tip, and now we will arrange some other signals."

The detective spent an hour with Madge, teaching her various signals. He found her an apt scholar. She took hold with remarkable intelligence and gave evidence that her memory was equally wonderful.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### A DOUBLE TRAIL COMMENCES.

HAVING concluded his instructions the detective went forth. He gave some signals and one of the brightest youths on earth caught the pantomimic intimations. Murray then walked away, but in about half an hour a poor beggarly looking man appeared in the vicinity of the house where Madge had her home. The seeming beggar lay around in a listless manner until Miss Dean, following her instructions, issued from the house and started up the street. The beggar followed.

The girl proceeded along the route indicated for her by the detective. She walked down toward the river and upon the bank appeared to be watching the craft going up and down the stream. Murray, who was the pretended beggar in disguise, had not seen any one on her track and he muttered:

"This time it is no go."

The detective lay around, and was about to approach the girl and signal her, when suddenly from an opposite point he saw two men strolling down the river shore, and a moment later two other fellows were visible stealing along



after the first two. We use the words "stealing along" as it describes particularly the motions of the four men. "Hello!" muttered Murray, "what does this mean? Great ginger! have I been mistaken? Is it possible Ike is right? Am I to learn that the beautiful Rose is not a thief, and is it, indeed, a greater mystery than I had dared predict?"

The detective thought over the matter, and again soliloquized:

"They may not be detectives, and, hang it, I believe one part of the mystery is explained. The robbery may have been committed by a gang; the girl Rose may have tried to 'bilk' her pals and they are seeking to get back the 'swag.' That will explain the statements and arguments of Madge Dean. Yes, I am on to it now; I see through the whole thing; but, hello! what's going on now!"

One of the men had advanced and was speaking to Madge, and the detective was forced to acknowledge the girl's great nerve and confidence. He had told her not to fear under any circumstances—that he would be at hand; and the cool manner in which she was talking to the man proved that she had perfect faith in his assurance.

Murray approached nearer to where Madge stood talking with the man. He saw the others approaching—actually stealing forward—and his quick eye discerned that some scheme was in contemplation. He had his club ready. He discerned that there was to follow a fight. He feared he had let matters go too far. He drew quite close, and it was lucky, for suddenly the man leaped forward. He seized Madge and clapped, as it proved later on, a silk handkerchief saturated with chloroform to the girl's nostrils. At the same instant the other three men ran forward; but our hero was on hand as quick as the assailants. He struck the man who had held of Madge, who let go his hold, and the girl fell to the ground. A combat fol-

lowed; all four men made a combined assault on the detective, but the latter was an old hand at the business. He was as quick and skillful with his club as an expert swordsman is with his weapon. Crack! crack! descended the terrible locust on the heads of the men. They fought desperately, however. One of them had drawn a pistol, but it was knocked from his grasp; a second one drew a knife; that too was sent flying from his hands; the third man seized a big stone and let it fly; the stone struck the detective on the shoulder and for an instant paralyzed him, but ere he could fling a second boulder he received a clip on the head that sent him to earth. The four men were bleeding like bulls, and finally appeared to discern defeat, and feared being disabled, and away they sped with what remaining strength they had.

The fight had only lasted three minutes, but it had been a desperate one. The detective's movements had been so violent he was almost winded, and he was not sorry to see the men make off, and really at the moment he did not have strength to follow them. In the meantime Madge had risen to her feet. She did not appear to be at all disconcerted by her experience, and she said coolly:

"You did well; you have kept faith with me; and what do you think now—are those men detectives?"

"Well, you are right down to business," said the detective with a smile.

"I am a woman. I like to prove myself right."

"And what do you seek to prove?"

"First, that those men were not detectives."

"No, they were not detectives."

"They were assassins."

"That does not follow."

"You believe all my statements now?"

"I believe that all you told me was the truth as far as you are concerned."



"And you are now convinced that Rose is not a thief?"  
The detective did not answer.

"Come; you are a man; you do not wish to admit when you are wrong."

"That is not it."

"Then tell me."

"I do not wish to disappoint you."

"How disappoint me?"

"You believe Rose Inness is an innocent person?"

"I do, and I think now it is proved."

"You are mistaken."

"Those men were not detectives."

"No."

"They intended for some reason to abduct me."

"So it would appear."

"Why should they attempt to abduct me?"

"I do not know."

"I can tell you."

"Do so."

"Because I know all about Rose."

"Well?"

"That is convincing."

"To you, yes; not to me."

"Then what is their purpose?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Please tell me."

"They are part of the gang."

"What gang?"

"The gang of thieves of which Rose Inness is a member. She evidently got away with the 'swag.' She has escaped. Now they think you have the 'swag,' and they wish to secure you, that's all."

"That is your opinion; like all men you do not wish to admit that you are wrong."

Murray was amused by the vivacity and bright persist-



ence of the girl. He began to think she was really handsome; her animation and liveliness atoned for the lack in other directions.

"I am compelled," he said, "to adhere to a theory that is so well supported by evidence."

"One thing you will admit—I am in peril."

"No, I will not admit that."

"Not after what has just occurred?"

"No, not after what has just occurred."

"Then you think those men meant no harm."

"Yes, they meant to abduct you; that is certain."

"They will try again?"

"Yes."

"And you still say I am not in danger."

"I do."

"Then you are joking."

"No."

"Will you explain?"

"You are not in peril simply because you are under my protection."

"At present, yes; but you will not always be at hand to protect me."

"I will take precautions, however."

"Those men have trailed me to my new residence?"

"Yes."

"Then I am in peril."

"You will change your residence again."

"I cannot afford to go round paying rent in advance. I will return to my home in the country."

"Then you will be in peril."

"I will?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"They will follow you there and can more easily carry out their schemes."

"What am I to do?"

"Remain under my protection. I will provide a hiding-place for you."

"And I must hide?"

"Yes."

"I came to New York to study; if I cannot do so I must return home."

"Miss Dean, you are a very sensible person; yes, a very shrewd young lady."

"Thank you."

"Let me call your attention to one fact: we have in our possession money and valuables aggregating over a hundred thousand dollars, I am sure."

"You have."

"I merely hold them as custodian."

"Well?"

"It is stolen property."

"So you say; I do not agree with you."

"Yes, it is stolen property."

"Then why has not the fact of the robbery become public?"

"The detectives are keeping it silent."

"The detectives are at fault then, for they are not on the track of the thief, if your theory is correct, and the rascals are."

"There is a great mystery about the affair."

"So it appears, but I have no time to stay here and solve the mystery."

"One question: Suppose your theory is right."

"What theory?"

"Suppose Miss Inness is really innocent and not a thief."

"Well?"

"As a woman you certainly will be willing to aid in finding and rescuing her."

Madge was silent a moment and then asked

"Can I aid you?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Very materially."

"How?"

"I cannot tell you now, but you may be of great aid."

"If you would be frank and admit that Rose is innocent, I might be willing to aid you, but if she is a thief I am not a detective, and I have no motive for aiding in the capture of a thief. I have surrendered to you what you call the 'swag.' You are an officer; you have all the evidence I can give you; nothing remains for me to do."

The detective meditated a moment and then said:

"I will admit that there is a possibility that Miss Inness is not a thief, and if it so proves it is one of the most mysterious cases that ever came under my observation, and in order to solve the mystery it will require all the aid we can secure, and you may prove a great factor in solving the mystery."

"You wish me to become a detective's aid?"

"Yes, and let me tell you some women have proved wonderful detectives, and I will promise you that if in the end there is any reward you shall have an equal share, and I will add that the chances favor a very large reward."

"Why didn't you hold one of those men?"

"Why didn't Paddy hold the greased pig?"

"Because he couldn't."

"That is my case. There were four of them, and you can testify that I had my hands full; but the next time it may be different."

"And what do you want me to do?"

"Return to your home. I will follow at a distance. We may pick up something on the way; afterward I will decide upon our course. One thing is certain, you must not be permitted to run any risk."



"What will you do with me?"

"Between us now, Miss Dean, it is a matter of business."

"Very well."

"We must solve this mystery."

"I trust you will succeed."

"Are you not anxious to rescue Rose Inness?"

"I am."

"Very well; from this time out you live at the expense of Mr. 'Swag.'"

"Who is Mister 'Swag?'"

"The satchel that contains the money and jewels. No matter who the rightful owner may prove to be our pay must come from that bag. So you will have no delicacy when I insist upon paying all expenses for the present. Your studies must cease."

"For the present."

"Yes."

"How long do you think I will be compelled to play hide-and-seek?"

"I do not believe more than a week or two."

"You will solve this mystery in that time?"

"I hope to do so."

"What is it you propose?"

"I will find a home for you where you will be perfectly safe and also always at hand when we need your aid."

The girl was thoughtful a moment and then said:

"This is a very strange and novel position for me, a poor country girl."

"I admit the fact, but strange circumstances have made you a factor in a very strange and startling incident. You confess to a great interest in the beautiful girl, Rose Inness. I will soon know whether or not she is innocent, and if it proves that she is you will find ample satisfaction in aiding one so beautiful and unfortunate; yes, one of your own sex."

Madge started for her home and the detective followed behind. The girl reached her home without further adventure, and the detective, having worked a transform, a little later also entered the house.

He opened up his plan to Madge, and she agreed to become for the time being the detective's active aid.

Ike Albro called at the house and was introduced to the girl. Murray had a twofold object in introducing Ike, and it was arranged that between the hours of nine and ten Madge should go to the home of a friend, a detective. Her rooms were to remain as they were.

The detective had fixed upon a great scheme, and when he and Ike were alone he asked:

"Ike, can you make up for Miss Dean?"

"I can become her double."

The detective had related to Ike all the incidents attending his adventure, and Ike had said:

"My view of the case is being confirmed. You will have to come to my idea. Rose Inness is not a thief."

"Ike, if she is not a thief, or the pal of thieves, how did she chance to be running around the country with a large treasure in a satchel, hiding from her own shadow?"

"I tell you it is a great mystery, and we will have the job of our lives to get at the bottom of it."

"We will do it, Ike."

"I hope we may succeed."

"Have you a theory, Ike?"

"No, the circumstances are so remarkable I cannot build a theory."

"What bothers you?"

"The treasure."

Murray laughed and said:

"Ike, that is a dead sure index that that girl is a thief."

"Then where are the detectives?"

"They will show up."



"Then who are these men?"

"It is for us to learn."

"You saw their faces?"

"Yes, I did, and, by ginger! Ike, it just strikes me that those men were under cover."

"Aha! how about that?"

"It is mysterious, Ike."

"What am I to do?"

"We must get their real faces."

"How?"

"You set to work to make up for the girl."

"Madge?"

"Yes."

"And then?"

"I will open up my plan."

"I know your plan."

"Oh, certainly, you can go through anything. What do you think of it?"

"A good one."

"How long will it take you to make up?"

"I can be ready by nine o'clock to-night."

"Good enough; we may have an exciting night of it, Ike."

"It's time we had a little fun; we have been quiet quite a time now."

"We will get stirred up to-night."

At nine o'clock that same night a boy entered the house where Madge dwelt, and a full hour passed; then a female came forth and started to go toward one of the great avenues, and one who was watching saw a man start and follow the lady; the man had been laying around for over an hour.

The watcher did not follow far; he returned to the house. He entered and a little time after a gentleman and lady came forth from the house. It was a remarkable



fact that the lady was the same one who had left the house alone some time previously. How on earth she re-entered that house was a mystery. Well, dear reader, she had not left the house. A great game was on, and will be duly opened up as our narrative proceeds. As the lady and gentleman proceeded along the latter remarked:

"Well, we will give them the dead 'shake' this time," and the lady remarked:

"It is a wonderful trick. Do you know, I really think I shall enjoy this detective business. I have always liked excitement."

"We have just started in, Miss Dean; you will have heaps of excitement and adventure before you get through."

While our hero was leading Madge to her new home we will follow her double, the Madge who apparently issued from the house.

Our readers will appreciate the trick without further explanation. A double was employed to draw away any possible watchers, while the real female was spirited, as indicated, to her new home.

Meantime a "shadow" had been in progress. The double, who, as our readers have discerned, was our nimble friend Ike, had kept moving. He had his instructions, and if ever there was a person who carried out instructions to the letter that party was Nimble Ike. He walked around and in a most perfect manner acted his role of a young lady. He knew he was playing a great game.

Ike had discovered that a man was on his track, and to him his present role was an old trick, and it was the play he most enjoyed.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE "DOUBLE" DOUBLES UP A ROGUE.

IKE finally walked down to an unfrequented neighborhood. He knew the man was tracking him. He stopped in front of a tenement house and acted as though he were looking for a certain number. He drew a card from his pocket, raised his veil and stepped to a gaslight, seemingly to read his card. He knew his every movement was watched. He pretended he had gotten on the wrong street. It was his trick and he started down to one of the lower avenues toward the river, so as to pass to a very lonely neighborhood, and as he picked his way he pretended to fall, and ere he could rise to his feet the man was upon him.

"Can I be of any service to you?" demanded the fellow, who had been on the "shadow." The latter spoke in tones and with a preciseness of language that astonished Ike. He had expected to be addressed by a very common man, when indeed the party who spoke to him appeared to be a gentleman.

"No, thank you," the disguised lad said.

"You are looking for an address?"

"I am."

"I may aid you in that direction."

"Do you live around here?"

"No, but I am acquainted with the neighborhood."

"Possibly you can aid me."

"I will if I can."

"I am looking for a young lady."

"Ah! her name?"

"Patterson."

"I do not know a lady by that name, but this is a very lonely neighborhood."

"Yes."

"It is not a safe place for a young lady to be traveling alone."

"Oh! I can take care of myself."

"You may be very brave, but suppose some man should accost you?"

"I do not fear a man."

"Yes, I say you are very brave."

"Yes, I am able to take care of myself."

"You think you can take care of yourself?"

"Yes."

"You are sure?"

"Yes, I am sure."

The two were walking at the moment on the edge of an embankment and Ike could see that there was a ditch filled with water below.

"What would you do now if a man should accost you right here?"

"Oh! I know what I would do."

"You would scream, I suppose."

Ike had managed to catch a glimpse of the man's face as they passed a gaslight.

"No, I would not scream."

"Oh, yes, you would; all women scream when they are scared."

"Do they?"

"Always."

Ike was talking for beans. He was making a study as he carried on the talk and framed his answers so as to invite further questions.

"I wouldn't scream."

"What would you do?"

"Oh, I know what I would do."



The man laughed. Ike had come to a halt for reasons which will be indicated. He did not wish to walk beyond the embankment.

"What would you do?"

"Oh! I know."

"Show me."

"Why should I show you?"

"Just for fun. You really amuse me; you appear so self-confident."

"I am confident."

"Suppose I assail you?"

"Assail me?"

"Yes; what is to prevent?"

"I thought you were a gentleman."

"I am."

"Then you will not assail me."

"But suppose I should, what would you do?"

"Oh, I know what I would do."

"Show me."

"You are awful funny," said Ike.

"I am?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"Well, you talk so funny."

"I think you talk funny. Why should you talk about assailing me?"

"Only in fun."

"Oh, yes; but why should you assail me in fun?"

"Just to see what you would do. I am so amused."

"Are you really amused?"

"I am."

"And you want to be amused more?"

"Yes."

"You want to have some fun?"

"Yes."

"All right."

"Show me what you would do if a man were to accost you here."

"You show me how a man would accost me."

The stranger leaped forward and attempted to seize Ike around the waist, saying as he did so:

"This is what he would do."

Ike leaped back, then turned a remarkable somersault, landing his feet square on the man's stomach with the remark:

"That is what I would do."

Ike's words rang in the man's ears as he went over the embankment, and as the declivity was very steep he could not stop himself and went over until he plunged head first into the ditch, and when he struggled above the surface he found himself in water to his waist, and down through the darkness came a merry laugh and the words:

"Ain't it funny! Now you know what I would do. Good-night, mister; don't accost ladies in future before you know in advance just what they would do under certain circumstances."

Ike moved away and an instant later met a man.

"There he is," said Ike; "now go for him."

The man advanced and arrived opposite the point where the accoster had gone over the bank just as the latter started to climb to the top. The man, as our readers have discerned, was Murray, and he called:

"Hello! are you in trouble down there?"

No answer came, and the detective again called:

"Can I help you?"

The man did not answer, but slowly climbed up the embankment, and soon, all wet and dripping, he confronted Murray.

"How did you fall over, sir?" asked Murray.

"I don't know."



"You must have lost your footing."

"Yes, I lost my footing."

"Can I be of any service?"

"No; you are very kind but you cannot aid me."

"I will do what I can."

"You are very kind, but I am all right now."

"Lucky the water wasn't very deep."

"It was deep enough for me; I went under."

"Indeed, it's lucky you were not drowned."

"Yes, it's lucky. Did you see a young lady go along here?"

"Yes, I met a lady running away. I addressed her, but she appeared to be in a very merry mood and did not answer me."

"She has cause to be merry."

"Did she push you over?"

"No, but it was in trying to save her from falling over that I went down myself. She might have waited to learn if I was drowned or not."

"I can't aid you?"

"No, I am much obliged."

"I will bid you good-night, sir," said Murray, and he walked away. A little later he was joined by Ike. The latter had discarded his female "rig" and appeared as a little gamin.

"I've marked him," said Ike.

"Yes."

"Do you need me now?"

"No."

"You are on to his track?"

"Yes."

"I've got his 'mugg' in case you lose him. He is not a rough; he appears to be a gentleman."

"Are you sure he is not a detective?"

"He is not a detective."



"Good-night, Ike; you may lay around for me."

"All right, cap."

Ike moved away and our hero started to follow the man who went over the cliff. He had little difficulty in keeping on the man's track, for he left a trail behind him having been soaked to the skin.

It was after midnight when Murray appeared at his home. He found Ike awaiting him.

"Well, how did you make out?"

"I am ashamed, Ike."

"You are?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"I got the *lose*."

"You did?"

"Yes."

"The man threw you off his trail?"

"Yes, and in the most remarkable manner."

"I will have to lay for him next time."

"I reckon you can beat me, Ike. I am good at planning but you have the knack of hanging on to a man's trail best."

"That is because I am so small; but tell me about it."

"I followed the man, who acted like a rabbit seeking to lead the dogs away from his burrow, and soon he was joined by another man, and the two walked awhile and then they were joined by a third and soon after a fourth man joined in and they walked until—hang it!—there were seven of them, and they all were dressed alike, looked alike, and acted alike, and when they separated suddenly I became dazed; I did not know which one to follow."

"Did you follow one of them?"

"Yes, and when I got down to him I found him as dry as a bone; the man I wanted, as you know, was drenched with ditch-water, so I had been duped."

"That would indicate that number one discovered that you were on his track."

"It would appear so."

"All right," said Ike; "I will try my hand at him."

"We may not be able to get on to him again."

"Oh, I will; but I wonder what he thinks of Miss Dean, and the way she showed him how she would act in case a man accosted her."

Murray and Ike both laughed heartily, and then Ike said:

"Cap, you have that photo?"

"Yes."

"You had better start out to find the original."

"We will; but first let us learn, if we can, how it was she became a fugitive, with so much money in her possession."

"Oh!" said Ike, in a sarcastic tone, "I thought you knew."

"Knew what?"

"Knew that she stole it."

"Ike, you are a rat. Hang you! things have developed which lead me to believe it possible that after all she may not be a thief."

"I'll tell you one thing, cap: Miss Dean is a very smart girl."

"She is."

"She is satisfied that Rose Inness is not a thief. I will travel a long way on Miss Dean's judgment. She associated with this missing lady for quite a time."

"Well, you may be justified, Ike, and to-morrow you can start in and get on this fellow's trail."

"I will, and now mark my words: this is, as I said from the start, a greater mystery than you dream of, and a wonderful development will come when we succeed in solving the affair."



On the day following the incidents in which all hands had participated Ike started out on a "shadow." He hung around hotels and all manner of public places and finally entered the bar-room of a well-known hotel. Two men were standing at the bar and at a glance Ike discovered that one of them was under a disguise—a very close disguise. He did not recognize any particular point in the man—only recognized that the man was disguised, and he had a little curiosity to see the fellow uncovered. He learned that the men were not friends; there had been a mere ordinary meeting and they had become engaged in a political discussion. Ike was about the only chap who would have conceived of the novel method he determined to adopt to go under the man's disguise. He was a great reader of the human face. He saw that the man who was not under a disguise was a very quick-tempered man, ready to fight for anything, even an opinion.

Our old-time readers know that Ike was a marvelous ventriloquist. He could beat the woman who astonished all Europe within the last ten months by making it appear that she could cause the dead to talk. Ventriloquism is now used for other schemes than mere amusement and Ike was a phenomenal expert. He took up his position. He had determined upon business and amusement. He watched for an opportunity and then the man under a disguise said, or appeared to say to his companion:

"You lie"

The man seemingly addressed moved back and demanded:

"Did you call me a liar?"

"No," said the man.

"My ears must have deceived me."

"Well, you are a liar, if that suits you," the disguised man appeared to say, and the quick-tempered man did not stop to inquire again. He drew off and without a word of warning struck the disguised man a powerful blow. The



latter fell, but was on his feet in an instant, and in his rage he appeared to forget that he was under a disguise, and he made a rush at the man who had knocked him down. A stiff fight followed; the men plugged each other and finally clinched in a terrible struggle and soon there followed a startling denouement. A wig came off of one of the combatants, and as the blood trickled down his face and he wiped it off there came a stain with it, and Ike stood and gazed in triumph. He had been deceived. He had not anticipated any such denouement, but the disguised man when partially unmasked stood sufficiently revealed to betray to Ike that it was the man whom he had sent rolling down the embankment on the previous night.

"Great ginger!" was his exclamation. "Well, we are in great luck."

Meantime the men had been separated and no one appeared to notice, save our hero, that the wig and the discoloration of the face was a disguise.

"Why did you strike me?" demanded the wigless man.

"Because you called me a liar."

The man had made a good fight indeed. He had got a little the best of the encounter.

"I did not call you a liar."

"If you hadn't I wouldn't have hit you."

"I swear I did not call you a liar."

"Then I must have lost my wits."

"I think you have."

Ike thought it was his turn, and stepping forward a well-dressed youth, and as it appeared the only one who had been near at the commencement of the fight, he said:

"Will you excuse me, gentlemen?"

Both men looked at the youth and Ike said:

"Possibly I can explain the mystery."

"What mystery?"

"The mystery about the lie."

"Go ahead and do so."

"It was a man out in the corridor calling another man a liar. This gentleman did not use the word 'lie,' and it's a pity you knocked off his wig."

All hands had been so excited they had not noticed the loss of the wig.

Ike had done a great job. He did not, as has been intimated, have any idea but a desire of having a little fun when he started in on his ventriloquism, and in a most astonishing manner he had brought about a very singular denouement.

The man picked up his wig. It was a mystery to the onlookers why he wore a wig. He did not look like a man who needed one. In the meantime the man who had struck the blow said:

"My friend, I am very sorry for what has occurred. You called me a liar, as I thought, and I was bound to resent it."

The owner of the wig answered:

"Oh, it's all right; I like a little shindy once in awhile; it starts the blood."

He could well say so, as he had served out his antagonist in pretty fine style.

The men shook hands and wine was ordered and they became quite friendly. Ike lay around. He was on to his game and he meant to run the man down, and he mattered:

"I will have something to tell the cap when I meet him, but it was a strange thing—my getting on to the man as I did."

The man remained some hours drinking and 'chinning,' as the saying goes. The men really became very loving as they began to feel the effects of the wine. Ike enjoyed the scene, but there was one fact he had observed: the owner of the wig only pretended to drink. He would sip



his wine and then toss it away; the other man, however, drank his down and was fast becoming really intoxicated.

It was after dark when the man left the hotel bar-room. He staggered away like one under the influence of liquor, but Ike knew the stagger was all put on for effect. He knew the man was perfectly sober. He was not a bad-looking man and he had a very shrewd, sharp face, proving him to be a person of great courage and determination. His manners were good, also his language, and in appearance he did not indicate a ruffian.

Once outside the man straightened up and walked at a brisk rate. Ike followed until he saw his game enter a well-known club house.

"He will be there some time, I know," muttered Ike, and he added: "I reckon I will go over to one of our stations and make up a bit. He is a wonderfully shrewd chap. He saw me in the hotel and he may fall to my identity. I'll work a change."

Fifteen minutes following the disappearance of the man in the club house a rather feeble-looking old man appeared in the vicinity, and Ike had judged well, for it was well on toward midnight when the man stepped forth from the club house. Ike fell to his "shadow" and the man entered a car. Ike had gained a position on the upper crossing and when a car came along he saw his man enter it. Ike took the same car at the upper corner. He, as our readers know, was disguised as an old man, and in taking his seat in the car he chanced to crowd a dudish-looking young fellow—a regular puke, as the old-time New Yorkers were accustomed to designate the modern dude.

"Say, old man," said the young fellow, "you are too fresh."

Ike laughed exactly like an old man. Seeing that the passengers were attracted toward him he said:

"The car jostled me and I fell into the seat. I am not



as young and fresh as I used to be when I was about your budding age."

"Who are you talking to?"

Ike glanced over his spectacles and said:

"I was addressing you."

"Well, hold your tongue; don't speak to me again."

"See here, my young friend, that is not the way to talk to an old man."

"Old men are nuisances."

"Are they?"

"Yes."

"So are pukes."

"Ah! what's that!"

"You said old men were nuisances."

"So they are."

"And I said pukes or dudes were nuisances."

"Who do you call a puke?"

"No need to call you one."

"Eh! what's that!"

"No need to call you a puppy; all I'd have to do is whistle and you'd come."

Ike during the whole talk maintained the character of an old man to perfection.

"You are insulting," said the dude.

"Am I, indeed?"

"You are, very."

"I would have said nothing to you if you had not first spoken to me. I would merely have had my fun laughing at you."

"Laughing at me?"

"Yes."

"I'd like to know why you would laugh at me?"

"You look so funny. They didn't have your kind when I was a young man; people wouldn't raise 'em in those days."

The people in the car laughed audibly and the dude began to show signs of anger.

"If you weren't an old man I'd warm your cheek."

"Eh!"

"If you weren't an old man I'd warm your cheek for your impudence."

"You would warm my cheek?"

"Yes, I would, if you were not an old man."

"Why, dudie, you could not warm any one's cheek. All you're good for is to suck on a nursing bottle."

"Shut up, I tell you."

"No, I won't."

"You won't?"

"No."

"Hang it! I can't restrain myself much longer; old as you are I'll teach you a lesson."

"You will?"

"Yes."

"What will you do?"

"That's what I'll do, you impertinent old fool."

As the young man spoke he knocked off the pretended old man's hat.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A DUDE GETS A SURPRISE.

THE people in the car cried shame, but they were hushed in a moment when the seeming old man dealt the dude a ringing slap on the face, and then there followed a remarkable scene: the dude, maddened beyond all self-control, made a strike out to return the blow when the old man seized him by the collar of his coat, lifted him out of his



seat and with an agility that was phenomenal he jerked the fellow toward the door and sent him whirling out on the platform. The people in the car applauded and the hero seized his hat and leaped from the car. One overbearing sneak had been well served out. Ike settled down with a paper and commenced to read. He had not once looked at the man he was trailing, but when the man left the car our hero rose, and a little later also dismounted. The man had ridden uptown almost to the Harlem river, and he started to walk in the same direction along the car route.

"Hello!" muttered Ike; "has that fellow tumbled? why didn't he stay on the car?"

The man crossed the Harlem Bridge and kept on his way. He walked for over a mile and finally turned off, and our hero saw him at length enter an old colonial stone house.

It had been a very difficult matter to "shadow" the man, and our hero had to depend upon a great deal of keenness in order to keep out of sight and hold his "shadow," and he was fully five hundred feet away when the man entered the house. Indeed the lad was compelled to guess that he had done so.

Ike did not follow the man right up. He lay around a long time. He did draw nearer to the house for a closer observation, and he was able to see the man come forth and look around in a furtive manner.

"By ginger!" muttered the boy, "that man did see me, or he is eternally on the lookout for a 'shadow.' He is cunning. All right; I am patient; I can afford to wait until he is satisfied and then I will go forward and investigate. I am determined to know who is in that house and what is going on in there, and I'll take big chances."

Ike cast off his old man's uniform and appeared more like a circus gymnast than anything else. He was dressed



in a tight-fitting soft buckskin suit in order to get the advantage of all his native suppleness, and in order to be ready for an emergency he had his suit oiled and greased, and with his twisting and squirming abilities he would prove a hard one to hold in a struggle. Indeed the lad was armed and equipped for any emergency. He could have plunged into the river and emerging have shaken himself like a dog and cast the water off. The house was situated about a quarter of a mile from the river, and the lad soliloquized:

"Who knows, I may have to swim for it before morning."

Patiently the lad waited fully two hours—waited until an hour had passed succeeding the man's last outside reconnoitering peep, and then he approached nearer to the house. His tread was as noiseless as that of a cat. He crawled and walked round and round the house, surveying it from every quarter.

It was about midnight and there appeared but a faint glimmer of light from one room on the ground floor. The lad approached the porch, crept to one of the windows and peeped in, or tried to do so, but the chink through which the light gleamed was so small it could only pass the light, and did not permit a glance.

The lad went to several windows and found them all closely shuttered.

"Hang it!" he muttered, "no one can learn anything about what is going on in that house from the outside; one must go inside. Good enough! I will go inside."

The lad listened with his ear close to the chink for the sound of voices, but heard none. He then began to study how he could get into the house. Finally he went to one of the wings and figured that he could remove a shutter from one of the cellar windows. He worked noiselessly and patiently and finally succeeded, and then bravely crawled through and found himself in a damp cellar apart-

ment. He was a slow moving lad when extreme deliberation was necessary and a very quick one when celerity was required, and after getting into the cellar he lay low, standing stock still as well, as the girls say. He did not dare flash his light. He had a remarkable lamp of his own manufacture—one that would have brought him a fortune had he applied for a patent. He did not think of that; he had only made the lamp for his own convenience and use. It was a wonderful lamp, however; with it he could shoot out a slender narrow shine of light, and fix it on any one given point, or he could broaden the line of light, or if need be give a bright prevailing flash, sufficient to illuminate a good-sized apartment. He did not use this lamp at first, but just stood and listened; then in good time he made a step forward and tripped, but he did not fall. He always moved slow in the dark. He came to a halt, reached down and felt; it appeared that he touched a box; he ran his hand over it like a blind man feeling for identification, and then his blood ran cold. He was a brave lad, but he was human and subject to superstitious fears when brought in contact suddenly with anything uncanny, and he had made, as he believed, a very startling discovery. He had marked the outlines of a coffin and the conviction sent a chill through him, and it was some moments before he felt like flashing a light to confirm his suspicion. He did, however, and sure enough the object he had tripped over was a coffin. He was on to business and immediately and perfectly cool. Ike was a born detective and when anything opened up to him that was out of the way he settled right down to careful investigation.

Before investigating the coffin Ike glanced around the cellar. He saw that it was walled off from the other portion of the house cellar, but there was an iron door opening into the other subterranean chamber. He looked



around for evidences of there having been an occupant of the coffin; he saw nothing; then he set to study the casket and discovered at once that it was almost brand new. The inside trimmings were all there and unsoiled; the wood of which it was made was but newly polished.

The lad stood and considered and he muttered:

"Well, well, I wonder what this means! Has the man upstairs prepared this for me or is he holding it in reserve for himself? I reckon I am on to something—the mystery deepens." The lad stopped and there shot over his face a startled look as he queried: "Or is it for a fair and beautiful young lady—for Rose Inness—or has she already occupied it?"

For a long time Ike stood and revolved the discovery over in his mind. There was nothing else in the cellar suggestive of mystery or a possible crime. There was a lot of rubbish lying around that might be found in any cellar.

"I reckon," Ike soliloquized, "that I will have to go upstairs to solve this mystery. One thing is certain: that polished casket has a history; it is in some way connected with the weird business that has brought me here."

Ike advanced to the iron door. It was not locked, and he drew it carefully open, extinguished his light, and stepped into the main cellar; there he stopped and listened. All was still—as still as though he were in a real vault. He advanced a few steps and again stopped and listened, and then let the single ray of his wonderful flash-light shoot forth, and he sent the strange poniard-like ray around in every direction. He saw nothing out of the way. There were many things in the cellar, but only such various articles as one might expect to find. He put on a stronger light and it failed to disclose anything of special interest; then he glanced around for a way to ascend to the floor above and he was well aware that the real risk in



the latter undertaking was to be encountered. He found an open stairway leading to the apartments above, and from his survey of the house he concluded that it opened into the hall which divided the old house in the center.

Slowly and listening at every move he advanced to the steps and put the fastenings of the door under his flashlight; one glance was sufficient. He had his bearings and knew that he could easily open the door, whether it were locked or not, and after ascending the step he extinguished his light and listened. He heard no sounds and after due deliberation he attempted to open the door, and succeeded, and found himself, as he concluded, in the great hall. Here he stopped and listened as before, and in due time let the single ray creep around, and he got an idea of the whole interior of the house on the lower floor, and while he still gazed he heard a step, a very light step, but unmistakably a step, as though one were coming down an uncarpeted stairway. Out went Ike's light and at the same instant the door of a room opened and there shot forth a bright glare of light; and here is where the lad's wonderful caution saved him, although he had a very narrow escape from discovery. He stood near a recess and he slid back out of sight just in time, and by a fortunate accident possibly saved himself. He did not dare peep out, but he was aware that some one had descended the stairs and that a second party had opened a room door on the first floor, and an instant later he heard a voice inquire:

"Is that you, my child?"

"Yes, papa," came the answer, in a charmingly sweet voice.

Ike at that moment would have given a big sum for one peep, but the risk was too great, and he lay low. He could not see, but he could hear.

"Why are you not in bed, my dear?"

"Oh, papa, I am so nervous; I have been alone all the evening."

"Alone, my child?"

"Yes."

"How is that?"

"Kitty went out this afternoon and has not returned. I was in a terrible state when I heard your signal announcing your visit, but you did not come up and see me."

"I thought Kitty was with you and I believed the assurance of my presence was enough."

"Papa, how long must we stay here?"

"I cannot tell, my child; my business may be through almost any time and then we will return to our home abroad."

"Oh! papa, I do wish we were going to-morrow!"

This conversation was in progress as the girl crossed the hall and joined her papa at the door of the lower room, and our hero heard a kiss, and later the door of the room closed and darkness prevailed once more.

Ike lay low for a minute only; he was set to take great chances; he desired to overhear more of the conversation; he advanced to the door of the room from which he had seen the man issue, or rather he had concluded he knew the room, and what was more he did recognize the voice of the man, and the conversation had really been very suggestive. Ike was a wonderful peeper, and the old house with its old-fashioned locks furnished excellent opportunity. He stood a moment with his ear to the keyhole before peeping in. He was acting with his usual caution, guarding against the possibility of surprise; a moment later he peeped, and a sight met his eyes that fairly staggered him for an instant and he exclaimed almost audibly:

"Great Scott! what does it mean! was the cap right, after all, and is Rose Inness a thief or companion of thieves?"

When Ike glanced into the room he saw the man whom he had "shadowed" sitting at a table. The man looked



very comfortable and contented. He was smoking a fragrant cigar and a glass of wine was before him. At the same table, opposite to the man, sat the young lady whose voice our hero had overheard and that young lady was the original of the photograph that had been shown to Ike as a portrait of Rose Inness. It was not strange that he was taken all aback, for there was no evidence before him of durance in the attitude of the young lady. She had called the man papa. She sat there looking at him in a loving manner, with every indication of confidence and trust. Ike could overhear the conversation and as he listened he became impressed with the fact that the mystery was growing in density.

"Oh! papa!" he heard the girl say; "it seems so strange for me to be cooped up here in this old house."

"It will not be for long, my child."

"But, papa, I have been here some weeks already."

"I know it, my child."

"Why can't we return to Europe where we were so happy?"

"We will, my child."

"When, papa?"

"As soon as some business is settled. I need money, my child. I am expecting to get it; as soon as I get the money we will return to Europe."

Ike had reason to ponder. He wondered how much money the man needed, as the girl Rose, his daughter, had run away and left behind her money and jewels valued at over sixty thousand dollars. As intimated, the mystery deepened. Ike could not understand it at all. He looked and looked at the girl, and sure enough it was Rose—at least the original of the portrait. He felt there was no doubt in that direction. Meantime the conversation continued and Ike became more and more bewildered.

"I thought you were rich, papa."



"I was rich, my child, and really I am rich now, but I need ready money."

"Oh, I wish I had some ready money to give you, papa."

The man smiled and Ike could see the smile on his face.

"I wish you had, my child."

"How much ready money do you need, papa?"

"Why do you ask, my child?"

"I have a little money."

"You have?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"I think I've got nearly a hundred dollars."

Again the man smiled as he said:

"So much, my child."

"Yes."

"Well, my dear, you are very kind in your innocence to offer to loan me your money, but I need at least twenty thousand dollars."

"Twenty thousand dollars, papa," ejaculated the girl.

"Yes, twenty thousand dollars."

Ike stared. There was more than twenty thousand dollars in the satchel, and again he examined the face of the fair girl. There was no mistake—it was indeed the original of the picture, and the original of the picture, Rose Inness, had disappeared and left over sixty thousand dollars in value with Madge, and that money at the moment was in the possession of Detective Murray.

"It gets me," muttered Ike.

"Oh, papa" said the girl, "where will you get twenty thousand dollars?"

"I expect to get it, my child."

"How, papa?"

"Don't ask me. When I get it we will return to Europe, and now I think you had better retire."

"I am so nervous."

"Yes, my child; but it is far into the morning. See—it is almost one o'clock."

"I wish Kitty was here."

"You need not fear; I will not go away in the morning until after Kitty returns."

"Papa, do you know I've got a strange presentiment."

"You have, my child."

"Yes, papa."

"Well, drive it away."

"I do not believe we will ever return to France and to our beautiful home, where mamma lived with us."

"Yes, we will, my child, and we will return very soon; I will return for your sake; and now retire to your room. We will talk it over to-morrow."

Every word that was spoken but deepened the mystery. The girl did not look like a thief; the father did not look like a bad man, and he evidently idolized his child. The girl appeared to be a simple-minded person, very simple-minded, and very timid, trusting and loving. So far her character accorded with what Ike had heard about Rose, but there still remained the mystery of the money. If the father needed only twenty thousand dollars, less money than the girl had once possessed, why did she not tell him?—especially as he wished to use the money to do what she most ardently desired—return to France. There came another strange phase of the affair: Why had the man pursued Madge? Did he know she had the money? Had she really stolen it and entrusted it to his daughter? Had she left it with Madge and so reported to her father? or, as Ike ejaculated:

"What in thunder does it all mean, anyhow?"

"Come, my child, please retire."

"I will, papa, but I cannot rid myself of a strange presentiment, and I have such unpleasant dreams."

"Oh, they will all disappear when we get on the ocean."



"Papa, each day my presentiments become darker and darker. I wish we had never left France."

"We will soon return, my child. Yes, we will soon return."

"Never, papa, never."

"You are very low-spirited just now, my child, but you will get over it; if I did not believe so I should go mad—go crazy. Come now, go to bed."

The girl rose, went round to her papa, kissed him in a loving manner, and then said:

"I will try to be cheerful, papa. Yes, I will try, for your sake."

Ike could not remain longer and he darted away.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MYSTERY DEEPENS AND DEEPENS.

IKE got to his hiding-place. He heard the door open, and listened when the fair girl spoke her final good-night. He heard the father's kiss upon her cheek as he said good-night, and then the door closed and all was dark again.

Ike waited. He was not ready to leave the house. He believed it would pay to watch the man. He hoped he might do a little soliloquizing, and in a soliloquy one is at times likely to betray more than in a direct conversation.

In due time Ike crept back to the door and peeped in once more. The man was reseated at the table and he was in a meditative mood. He sat lost in deep thought for a long time, but at length, as Ike had anticipated, he began to "think aloud." He said in an audible tone:

"Oh! that it were all over with! I am taking great chances, my scheme may fail and then—well, well, it's



terrible to think of. What will I do!" The man was silent again, but at length resumed speaking, and there was a wild look upon his face as he said, slowly and distinctly:

"Yes, if I fail I will put a bullet through my brain." He started, glared an instant and then said:

"No, no, that will not do—no, that will not do. I cannot leave my child, my beautiful, innocent, trusting child, and then, alas! if I fail I am a criminal. I may be put in jail! my poor child, it will be worse for her then. Yes, better I were dead! better I were dead!" Again he stopped, and finally in a husky voice said:

"Yes, yes, there will be nothing left for me to do. I cannot leave my child to the world. I cannot go to jail. I will kill her, then kill myself, and we will both be at rest. We will join her whom we both loved. Oh! if I only had a few thousand dollars! but I may have struck for too big a stake; that may lose me my game. Yes, that may lose me my game. Oh, for a few thousand and I'd flee to France and leave all this trouble behind, and start on a surer road to fortune; but I have cast the die! I do not know what number will come up! I have crossed the Rubicon! I do not know that I shall ever reach the opposite shore. It's all getting very dark to me. Clouds seem to be settling down upon me, but I have the same coffin; I can use it again—yes, use it again, and possibly to better purpose. I can put my child beyond all possible suffering and I can follow her. Yes, and if I fail that is what I will do. Come what may in the hereafter that is what I will do here if I fail—if I fail."

The man repeated the words, "If I fail," several times.

A few moments later and Ike discovered that the man intended to leave the room. He did not desire to be caught and he slid away and later crawled back through the cellar and made his way to the open air. He had had

a great night of it. He had seen a great deal, heard a great deal and learned much, but, alas! the mystery was deeper and more dense than before. He walked back toward the railway terminal and as he did so he indulged in considerable thinking, and he muttered:

"Well, well, for once in my life I am all at sea. I never encountered, heard or read of such a singular complication of strange and remarkable incidents. It beats all the experiences that ever came under my notice of myself or others. That man does not appear like a confirmed villain. He is a man of courage and evidently has great affection for his daughter Rose, and she appears to be a timid, loving girl; they are both well educated and evidently very refined in their tastes. He needs money, and yet his daughter was in possession of more than double the sum he claims he needs to make him perfectly happy; indeed, to save him from a deed of murder and suicide. The girl appears perfectly frank and yet talks as though she knew nothing about the money, or else under her display of love and deep affection she has some deep design in concealing the fact that she has all the money; and it is possible she has a purpose; if she has then she is a magnificent actress, and as subtle as Satan himself. I do not understand. I am perplexed. I am in a maze of bewilderment, but we will watch, wait and study; this mystery must and shall be solved."

It was well on toward morning when our courageous little adventurer showed up at the home of Detective Murray. He found the latter just returned from a "shadow." Detectives have no regular hours for sleep or anything else. Their success depends upon eternal vigilance, and in sunshine and storm, day or night, they must hang to a trail, and when on a shadow there is not for them either food or rest unless a momentary opportunity offers.



The detective greeted Ike warmly and said:

"Well, lad, you've had a night of it."

"Yes, I have."

"And what have you made out?"

"Nothing."

"You were beat, eh?"

"No."

"What then?"

"I've had a great night of it. I've learned some very wonderful facts, and yet we are deeper in the dark than ever. Yes, captain, this affair beats anything we ever struck, and don't you forget it."

"Did you get on to your man?"

"I did, in the most remarkable manner and under the most singular circumstances."

"Let's hear about it."

Ike told of the manner in which he had by a mere chance unmasked his man, and the detective laughed heartily and said:

"Yes, lad, that was an odd incident."

"It was."

"Did you follow him?"

"I did."

"Go on and tell us your adventure."

"It was an adventure, indeed."

Ike proceeded—told how he had dogged his man, told of the stumble over the coffin in the old house, and then stopped.

"Go on, Ike; I was never more interested."

"Before I proceed I want to look at the photograph."

Detective Murray turned pale and asked:

"Eh! Ike, is it as bad as that?"

"As bad as what, cap?"

"You wish to compare the photograph with a dead face?"

"No, with a living face."

"Great Scott! lad, you do not mean to suggest that you have found Rose?"

"I'll tell you the story after I have seen the picture."

Murray produced the photograph and Ike studied it very carefully and finally he muttered audibly:

"Well, I don't know."

"What is it, lad?"

Ike finished his story and Murray listened with an amazed look upon his face and exclaimed:

"Was it Rose Inness?"

"As far as appearances go it was, but——"

"Well, go on."

"There are some things I do not understand. The girl was Rose, according to this picture, but then the conversation—the need of money—I cannot explain it. I cannot suggest a theory, can you?"

"Honestly, Ike, I am at fault. Can it be a resemblance?"

"We might say so, but there is the fact that this man is shadowing Madge, and it was from Madge that Rose was abducted, or from whom she ran away. If it were not for all the associations we might say it was a resemblance, but facts appear to point toward a positive identity."

"How will you solve the mystery?"

"To-morrow I will have a long talk with Madge and it may be that I shall start in on a very strange adventure. One thing is certain—the mystery must be solved."

On the following morning Ike called upon Madge. He carried the photograph with him. He found the girl bright, cheerful and clear in all her perceptions. To her he told his story, after having first inquired particularly as to the color of the eyes and hair of the missing girl, and both agreed with the appearance of the girl whom our hero had seen, and then he told her, as intimated, a part of the



story of his previous night's adventures, and when he had concluded Madge said:

"I do not believe it is Rose."

"But a resemblance so complete and perfect could not be expected."

"That is true—it is in some way connected with Rose, but from your description of the manner and way of talking of the lady you saw I do not believe it was Rose. My friend was quiet and timid-like in her actions, but under all there was a latent spirit of courage and determination."

"That is what I believe and this statement confirms the fact that it is Rose, and don't you see it accounts for the girl's being a fugitive, and having all that money, and it's my belief that herein lies the mystery. She did not want her father to have the money. He may be a wild speculator or there may be a hundred excellent reasons why she desired to keep a knowledge of the money away from him; and the girl I saw looked like one who could appear simple and innocent and yet possess nerve and determination. I believe you have solved to a certain degree the mystery."

"But why should she run away and leave the money with me?"

"She knew you were honest, and it is possible she may have desired to satisfy her own conscience when declaring that she had no money."

"It is all very strange," said Madge.

"Yes, it is, indeed, all very strange—the strangest adventure of my life."

"I wish I could see this girl," said Madge.

"That is what I have been thinking, and you can see her if you have the nerve and courage."

"I have both."

"You will run a little risk."

"I don't care. I'd run a great deal of risk; indeed, I am getting quite fond of adventure."

"It can be arranged."

"How?"

"You and I can go to the old house."

"Let's start at once."

"Oh, no; we must act with a great deal of caution. We do not know yet where this adventure will lead us. We must go slow."

"I must see her."

"You shall."

"When?"

"You can work a disguise under good instructions?"

"I can."

"We can disguise and go together, but we will have to go at midnight."

"Oh! that will be great!"

"But, one moment—we must change characters."

"Change characters?" repeated Madge.

"Yes."

"How?"

"I must become a girl and you——"

"What must I become?"

"A boy."

There came a doubtful look to the bright face of Madge.

"Is that necessary?" she asked.

"Yes."

"You want me to go disguised as a boy?"

"Yes."

"Why?"

"We will be traveling at midnight."

"All right; you will be with me."

"Yes, but if I am a boy-girl I can act quicker and better in an emergency. As a girl I may draw an insult and you will escape; they do not insult boys at night—they insult ladies."

"I have no boy's attire."



Ike laughed and said:

"I have."

"But how about a fit."

"You can leave that to me."

"And what will we do?"

"Go to that house, go through the cellar, step over the coffin and take all the chances."

"I do not mind that part of it," said Madge.

Ike had drawn the picture to test her.

"You will not be scared?"

"No."

"You will not scream if something comes on us quickly?"

"No."

"I can depend upon you?"

"You can."

"All right; I will be around here again in about two hours, and we will practice on your disguise. I think you will make a bully boy."

Madge looked at Ike's handsome face and said:

"I think you will make a girly girl."

"Thank you."

Two hours later Ike appeared and he carried with him a boy's suit which he thought would serve the purpose. He went into details with Madge, explaining to her how she must array herself, and he added:

"After you are rigged out come down and we will rehearse; I will see when you look like a boy whether or not you can act like a boy."

There was an amused smile upon the face of Madge as she said:

"Yes, we shall see."

Ike sat in the sitting-room of the house waiting for Madge to don the boy's clothes. Some time passed and the girl failed to show up. Our little adventurer was be-

coming impatient when the lady who kept the house entered the room and said to Ike, whom she knew well, for she was a relative of Detective Murray:

"Ike, there is a boy at the door who desires to see you a moment."

Ike smiled. He saw the trick he supposed Madge desired to play on him, but when he went to where the boy stood on the stoop, instead of seeing Madge in the clothes he had provided for her he beheld a little street gamin.

"You's Ike Albro?" said the boy.

Ike stared.

"Yes, I am Ike Albro."

"Sure?"

"Yes."

"Den I'se got to tell yer dat dere's a gentleman named Murray as wishes to see you right away."

"Where is he?"

"He says you'll know; dat's all; good-day."

The lad started off and Ike returned to the room. He wished to see Madge before joining the detective, and he became quite impatient because the girl did not appear. Fully ten minutes passed and Ike was about to summon the mistress of the house and leave word for Madge when a nobby looking youth came down the stairs.

"Great ginger!" cried Ike, "I thought you'd never come."

"How do I look?"

"You look all right; but I am sent for; I will go and return in a little time; Murray wants to see me."

"Did he send for you?"

"Yes."

"No, he did not."

Ike stared.

"You can't go, Ike. We must have a rehearsal."

"I will be back in a little time."



"And you want me to sit here and wait in this boy's rig?"

"Yes."

"I can't; let's rehearse."

"The cap sent for me."

"He did?"

"Yes."

"Who did he send?"

"A lad."

"He did?"

"Yes."

Madge smiled and said:

"All right, go ahead. I guess we won't need a rehearsal."

Ike was no fool and he gazed in wild astonishment. A weird suspicion was finding lodgment in his mind, but the possibility appeared too marvelous.

"You's Ike Albro?" said Madge, adopting the slang of the little gamin.

Ike just shouted as he said:

"You're immense, Madge. It was a great trick; I give you credit; no, we do not need a rehearsal. You are a boy of boys, you are."

Madge again laughed in a merry manner.

"Did I do it well, Ike?"

"You did."

"I thought I'd test myself."

"You did."

"And I did it well?"

"You did."

"I'll make a boy?"

"You are a boy."

"Then let's rehearse and see what sort of a lad I will make in good clothes."

"Go it."

To Ike's amazement Madge fell to a regular breakdown step. She did it well and every way imitated to perfection the manners of a rollicking young blade.

"Say, Madge," said our hero, "I was to protect you."

"Yes."

"No need—on the other hand you will have to protect me; but tell me—how did you get on to this business so quick?"

"Ike, I always was fond of mischief, and I've played the boy before. I played the role on the stage up in our town in an amateur theatrical company."

"Well, you'd make a hit in a regular company. You are just immense, you are. You take the cake."

"Thank you; and now when do we start?"

"I will be here about half-past ten to-night."

"And I am to be in this rig?"

"Yes."

"And you?"

"Well, I won't rig you as you did me. I'll appear here as a gay girl."

"Come early, Ike."

"Why?"

"We may have to rehearse. Yes, rehearse you as a girl." Ike laughed and said:

"I reckon it's all right. I've played girl before. Remember I made up for you a couple of nights ago."

"At ten-thirty I'll look for you."

"Good enough."

Ike gave Madge more full and complete instructions and then departed. Later he met Detective Murray and told him of the neat little trick Madge played on him. Murray was amused and said:

"She is a smart girl, Ike."

"She is a very smart girl. Yes, our girls around here are smart, you bet."



At half-past ten Ike showed up and he found Madge all ready to go with him, and a little later they appeared on the street. As our readers know, Ike could come the girl or young lady to a nicety, and as the two walked toward the corner where they were to take the cars Ike said:

"Now, Tommy, remember no one must insult me."

"What shall I do, Sissy, if some fellow gets impertinent?"

"Lay him out with a sockdolliger," said Ike with a laugh.

"I'll do it," came the answer, "and if I get a good one back you jump in and scratch his eyes out, will you?"

"I will, sure."

A car came along and the transversed adventurers boarded it, and strange to say they ran right into an adventure—one that is liable to be encountered at any time in a great city—and it was very singular though that after their joking that our two masqueraders should have fallen to a peculiar coincidence, though one of hourly occurrence.

On the car was a foreigner, a man exquisitely dressed, but with a pair of eyes well adapted to flash the insolent stares that ladies are continually compelled to face in traveling about New York, day or night, for these rascals who have no regard for the decencies appear to be ubiquitous. Madge in her male attire was but a slender-looking protector and Ike, being veiled as a mater of course, attracted attention and aroused the curiosity of the impudent foreigner.

A moment passed and then the fun commenced.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## IKE MAKES RARE SPORT IN A CAR.

THE man fixed his eyes on the veiled lady and sought by every expedient to attract her attention. The lad noticed the man's movements and also discerned the character of the chap, and he determined to do one good turn for the fair and defenseless sex whose plumage he had stolen for the time being. He submitted some time to the man's steady gaze and then, as though by accident, raised his veil and disclosed a glimpse of a really very pretty face. Ike possessed very delicate features, and when he made up for a female he could make himself look very attractive, and besides he only permitted the fellow, as stated, to catch an instant's glimpse of his face. The rascal's curiosity, however, was whetted. He evidently desired to see more of that face, and again he flattered himself that its beauty had been disclosed for his special benefit. His conclusion was correct, but the underlying motive he was to learn later.

The party sitting next to Ike left the car, and the man instantly stepped over and occupied the vacated seat. There were people in the car who saw the movement and looks of indignation settled on their faces, but as the man had committed no really overt act they could not protest; later they learned that the veiled lady could take care of herself. Ike, as the man took the seat beside him, rose and changed to the seat the foreigner had just vacated. The passengers laughed; they enjoyed the pretended girl's spirit and pluck. The *roue*, however, was very much annoyed and, as it proved later on, he was a bold-faced, insolent rascal, and when the seat beside Ike was vacated



again he deliberately changed back and once more planted himself beside the supposed veiled beauty. Then Ike demanded:

"What do you mean?"

"I can sit where I choose," came the reply.

"Yes, but you need not follow me around."

"I am not following you."

Ike winked to Madge, and the latter made a movement as though about to protest, when Ike said:

"Oh, never mind him, Bob. He doesn't amount to anything. I believe he is a pickpocket, but I am watching him; he will not steal anything from me, and I'll request the other passengers to be careful."

Well, the foreigner's face flushed with anger. Where he had thought he excited admiration he discovered that he was being denounced as a common pickpocket. He was mad and he said:

"You are very saucy."

The man spoke fairly good English.

"Do you think I am saucy?"

"Yes, I do."

"Well, see here, Mister Masher; if you had acted like a gentleman you would not have found out that I was saucy, and I repeat I believe you are a pickpocket."

"You had better be careful."

"Don't you dare to threaten me, sir."

"I do not desire to speak to you."

"Then hold your tongue."

"I am at liberty to talk as much as I see fit."

"Not to me."

"Yes, to you."

"Don't you address me again."

"I will say you are a person who should be put off the car."

The words had but left the man's lips when his hat

went flying off his head; by a deft swing of his arm Ike had sent it tumbling to the car floor. The man became furious. He made a dash to pull aside Ike's veil when a loud whack on his cheek resounded through the car and the man's fury increased. He went up beside and actually sought to grapple with the supposed female. As it afterward proved he was a native of a land where the blood boils and people will go any length when in a rage. But in this case, as it proved, the rascal tackled the wrong girl. Ike was a youth of phenomenal strength and he slung the fellow over quickly and deftly, causing him to stretch right out on the floor of the car, and then our hero and his protector passed out the front door. The wild man arose to his feet. He had seen Ike and Madge go out the front door. He uttered incoherent cries of rage, followed, and at the same instant the car stopped and the passengers were treated to a novel sight. The "masher" followed after Ike, when the latter actually leaped on his shoulders and whooped it up with hoop-las. The majority of the male passengers sprang from the car to see the fun. Their amazement was great when they saw the veiled girl, as they believed her to be, get down from the man's back and commence pummeling him in true fistic style, and the blows were puissant, as the scoundrel was knocked around like a wooden man, as the saying goes, and Ike was losing all this time and going through the scene simply in the interests of poor unprotected women.

He finally let the fellow go, and with Madge walked away as he heard one of the men say:

"The girl is taking care of the dude. That fellow was no help to her, but she did lay out her insulter well."

Ike and Madge meantime made their way along until another car approached, which they boarded and soon crossed the bridge and went afoot toward the old house. As they walked along Madge said:



"It's strange, but do you know I heartily enjoy all this."

"Yes, you are a great girl, Madge. You would make a female detective."

"Hardly; and what would my people at home say they saw me in the midst of this adventure?"

"They'd say hoop-la!"

In due time the two arrived in sight of the old house. Ike placed Madge where she could lay low and went forward to reconnoiter. All appeared quiet in the house and a light appeared to shoot forth from one window only, on the second floor. Our detective walked round the building several times, and was deeply intent on his study of the surroundings, when suddenly he heard a step and turned just in time to dodge a blow from a club. He took in the situation instantly. The man had discovered him, had armed himself with a club, and had come forth to knock him out. As intimated the lad dodged the stroke of the club and sprang upon his assailant; the assault was sudden and took the man unprepared. He was borne to the ground, and ere he could offer any resistance Ike had his hands caught in a rope loop of his own construction. The man was helpless and still less dangerous when Ike caught his feet also in a loop. Having his man secure Ike demanded:

"Why did you attempt to assail a woman?"

"What were you doing around my premises?"

"Suppose I was around your premises, couldn't you question a *woman* without seeking to knock her down with a club?"

"Who are you? what were you doing around here any way?"

"I did not know the house was inhabited. I was to meet some one near here."

"You were?"

"Yes."

"And you came here prepared to make a prisoner?"

"I am always prepared to make a prisoner."

"Yes, you are not a woman."

"We will not discuss that matter, mister, and I have no time to waste in talk. I will let you lie here until I meet my friend and then I may come back and talk with you."

Ike did secure the man so he could not even move and then he went and secured Madge.

"Come quick!" he said.

Madge was ready and the two hastened to the house. Ike, knowing he had the master all right, did not take the trouble to go through the cellar, but forced his way by the front door. He and Madge passed to the large hall and they discovered a light in the same room where the man and girl were when the conversation passed between them which Ike had heard on the previous night, and there came a voice asking:

"What was it, papa?"

Here Ike's wonderful imitative abilities came in. He said:

"Shut the door, my dear, and wait where you are for a few minutes; it's all right, and I will soon be with you."

The door of the room was closed immediately, and Ike whispered to Madge:

"You go and peep through the keyhole."

Madge did as directed. She gazed long and intently, and finally rejoined Ike, who stood a few feet off in a watchful attitude.

"It's wonderful, Ike."

"Is it?"

"Yes."

"What is wonderful?"

"The resemblance."

"The resemblance?"

"Yes."



"Is it only a resemblance?"

"It is only a resemblance."

"The girl is not Rose?"

"She is not Rose."

"You are sure?"

"I am sure."

"Dead sure?"

"Yes, dead sure."

"Let me peep an instant."

Ike did peep and returning beside Madge said:

"Yes, it is the same girl I saw the other night. She bears a wonderful resemblance to the photograph."

"She does, and she bears a wonderful resemblance to the living Rose."

"And yet it is not Rose?"

"No, it is not Rose."

"There is no possibility of a mistake on your part?"

"There is no possibility of a mistake. The girl in that room is not Rose Inness."

"And yet her father is the man who has been 'dogging' you."

"It is a strange mystery, Ike. Indeed, I am bewildered, but not confused so as to be mistaken. I am certain, yes, certain, beyond all possibility of mistake, that it is only a resemblance; it is not Rose Inness."

"Then there is no need for us to remain here. This mystery must be approached in another direction."

Ike led Madge back to the place where he had first left her, then he returned to the spot where he had left the man bound and gagged. He dragged the man to the large hall door and said:

"Your daughter is inside. She will hear you call and will come and release you."

"Hold on," said the man.

"Well."

"Will you explain your presence here?"

"No; maybe you know enough of your own doings to guess the cause of my presence. We may meet again. I have no more to say to-night. Good-evening."

Ike darted rapidly away. He did not stop to watch. He gained the place where Madge awaited him and asked:

"Are you tired out?"

"No."

"You are not anxious to go home at once?"

"No."

"You can await me here awhile?"

"All right, if necessary."

"I may get an opening flash-light on the mystery."

"I will wait here for you."

"I may be gone hours."

"No matter; go."

Ike made a change. He appeared once more in his greased suit—the same he had worn the night previous, and he returned cautiously to the house. The man had been released. Ike made his way to the cellar entrance and stepped once more over the coffin, and as upon the former adventure he moved forward and then stopped and listened, and so he proceeded until once again he found himself in the great wide hall. He beheld a gleam of light shooting from under the door of the room and he advanced and peeped in through the keyhole as before. There sat the man and opposite him stood the girl. The man appeared to be in a very thoughtful mood.

"Papa," said the girl, "you look distressed."

"Do I, my child?"

"You do, papa. I fear your affairs are not going right."

"Not just right, Grace."

"Why not return to Europe, papa?"

"Grace, I almost wish I had never come here."

"I do, papa; let us return."



"No, my child, I must wait a few days; I must learn what will develop, and now you retire; Kitty awaits you."

"I do not like to leave you, papa."

"You need not fear for me, my child."

"I do fear, papa."

"It will be all right; to-morrow will decide the matter, and we may return to France."

The girl started to leave the room and Ike got out of the way, but he returned almost immediately and found the man still sitting by the table, and as upon the previous night he commenced after a time to speak audibly. He said:

"I do not understand it. I had prepared to play a great game. I believed a fortune was in my grasp and here it appears I am being dogged and shadowed ere the crime is committed. Who has gotten on to my scheme? Who has learned in advance my intended great play—or what does it all mean?"

The man became silent and then resumed:

"It is possible I have overreached myself. The adverse play appears to have set in against me ever since I made an attempt to get possession of the girl. Probably by trying to make my game too absolutely safe I have invited a danger."

Ike overheard every word and he was more and more mystified and tried to think out the meaning of the man's strange, weird words.

Again the man spoke:

"Let me see," he said; "I may as well proceed; if I do not go on it's death to me and my child; if I go on and fail it is only death; there is no reason why I should not proceed. Hang it all! but I would like to know why I am 'shadowed.' I am fully convinced now that some mysterious person in the garb of a woman is playing a game against me. I will start in to-morrow to learn if I

can whence comes this opposition play, and at the same time I will complete all my plans for the carrying out of my scheme. The doctor is prepared to do his part any time. The whole scheme was his suggestion; I will go and see him to-morrow. We must act quickly now—but he is such a fool outside of his own craft. As a magician he is immense, and his knowledge of subtle drugs exceeds that of any doctor in the world, but when it comes to the business end of it he is not there. To-morrow I will go and see him; I will see what he proposes. We are both getting out of money. We will be beggars soon. We will not have money enough for the carrying on of our scheme. Yes, I will see him to-morrow, and I will not surrender all hope until I do see him; but who is that wonderful woman, or man in woman's attire, who deals with me as though I were a mere child?"

As intimated Ike overheard every word, and he muttered: "Well, I am not there yet, but I am getting there."

The man continued his soliloquy for some time but he did not reveal anything; on the contrary his words only deepened the mystery.

Our detective waited until he recognized that the man was about to retire when he escaped by the way he had entered.

Ike returned to where Madge still awaited him, and the girl asked:

"Did you learn anything, Ike?"

"No, the mystery is becoming more complex at every turn, but it is just possible I am on the lead for a very remarkable discovery."

"I cannot dismiss from my mind the remarkable resemblance."

"Oh, that is the simplest matter in the whole affair; resemblances are very common."

"But such a remarkable resemblance."



"You will not have to go far to find many a pair of girls who are unrelated and who bear a resemblance so close they might be taken for twin sisters."

"But remember, besides the resemblance comes the fact that this man is in some way connected with the fate of Rose."

"That is the only remarkable incident in the affair. Yes, this startling resemblance coming in connection with the other facts makes it very remarkable."

A little later and Ike had resumed his female attire. He did not wish to go through the streets in his supple uniform, as he called his greased suit. It was well on toward morning, or rather two hours after midnight, when the two started to return to the city. They trudged along talking over their adventure and were unmindful of their surroundings when suddenly they met—be it said to the disgrace of a great city—a policeman who had no regard for his duties. He beheld a veiled girl and a slight-built youth passing along at a very early hour in the morning and he thought he would amuse himself, without any regard to the feelings or rights of the late pedestrians. He approached them and in a rough tone demanded:

"Hello! what are you doing out here at this hour?"

"We are going home," said Ike.

"You are?"

"We are."

"It strikes me you are going home at a very late hour."

"Better go home late than not at all."

"Don't be saucy to me, miss."

"Why not?"

"Don't you see I am an officer."

"You are what?"

"An officer."

"Are you? Well I thought you were a fool."

"Eh! what's that?"

"No, it's what you are."

"See here, I'll take you in."

"Will you?"

"Well, I'll be blamed if you ain't the worst I ever heard. See here! don't you think you can sance me because you are a woman."

"I am not a woman."

"Well, a girl, then."

"Look out!" cried Ike.

The officer made a leap into the air as he heard a dog bark and snap at his heels. He turned with drawn club when the dog appeared to have got around him to his rear again and was barking like mad; the policeman turned round and round; having drank several hot whiskies he got dizzy and went reeling head first on his nose and then Ike and Madge darted away. The officer could not rise immediately. He rolled over on his back and lay there, and when he did recover from the blood swirl in his head he ejaculated:

"Well, hang me, if that don't beat the devil. There was a dog and there wasn't a dog. I heard him but I didn't see him, but he wer' barking at me heels and kept me turning until I wer' half drunk. Hang me, if I don't think I've rats in me head."

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## CHAPTER IX.

IKE AND MURRAY ENCOUNTER SOME STRANGE AND  
WEIRD ADVENTURES.

IKE and Madge reached the latter's home without encountering any further adventures on the way. After Ike's great trick with the policeman Madge said:



"That was the most remarkable use of ventriloquism I ever witnessed."

"Oh, it's easy enough."

"It is a wonderful gift, Ike."

"It has stood me in hand several times, and by its aid I've got out of many a bad scrape."

"You got us out of a bad one to-night."

"Oh, that was an easy one—a very easy one. I saw the officer had a head full of whisky and I made up my mind to give him a few turns, knowing what the result would be."

"You succeeded in the most remarkable manner."

"Well, yes, I did."

When our hero entered Murray's room he found the detective asleep on a lounge. The thief-taker awoke immediately and demanded:

"Well, Ike, how did you make out?"

"More mystery."

"More mystery, eh?"

"Yes."

"Was the girl you saw last night Rose Inness?"

"No."

"A resemblance, eh?"

"Yes, a remarkable resemblance."

"So I thought when you told me the story last night."

"I had a suspicion in that direction."

Ike proceeded and related all that had occurred and Murray sat for a long time lost in deep thought; finally he asked:

"Ike have you a theory?"

"No."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Follow that man in the morning when he pays a visit to the doctor."

"A good scheme, and if you get on to a talk between

them you will make great progress toward a solution of the mystery. I have been at work on this case, and we are not the only people who are hunting for Rose Inness. What is more, I do not believe there is any connection between the men I am trailing and the man you are tracking."

"What is your theory?"

"I have no theory; it is the strangest case and presents the strangest features of any case I ever undertook. I am all at sea."

"How about my getting on to the other party?"

"No, you follow up the man whose daughter resembles Rose; I will take care of the other, but I am satisfied of one thing—there are two parties on the lay for Madge."

Ike was thoughtful for awhile; a theory had run through his mind after he heard the statements and details from Murray, and he determined to follow Murray's advice and run down the man on whose track he had been.

Ike lay down and had two or three hours' refreshing sleep, but a little after daylight he was up and away. He proceeded to the vicinity of the old house and lay around for a long time. At length he began to think that he had lost his game, when he saw the man come forth with the beautiful girl, Grace, leaning on his arm; they took a long walk; Ike followed them although convinced that the father was merely taking his daughter out for an airing, and this conclusion proved correct, for after an hour or two they returned to the old house and the man entered with his daughter and did not reappear during daylight, and poor Ike was compelled to lie around all day and until nearly ten o'clock at night, when at length his patience was rewarded. He saw the man come forth and the lad fell to his trail, little dreaming of the wonderful disclosures that were to follow.

Ike followed the man downtown and saw him enter a



very respectable-looking house, on which was a sign bearing the name, "A. Credo, M.D."

"Aha!" muttered our hero; "we've got our doctor, and now for the talk between those men."

Ike walked several times by the house, which stood alone although there were houses twenty feet distant on either side and an iron rail fence showed that the house Ike's man had entered stood in the midst of a garden; and we will here remark that in the city of New York to-day there are many houses which if suddenly unroofed and their mysteries displayed there would follow discoveries that would make people open their eyes, the world over.

Ike walked around the square to the rear of the house and discovered, as he suspected, that the grounds ran through to the neighboring street. He determined to attempt an entrance from the garden and he leaped the high iron fence set in a stone coping. Once in the yard he fell at his old tactics of going very slow and stopping at every few steps to peer and listen, and in this way, without encountering any opposition, he arrived to within fifty feet of the rear of the house. Here he halted and sat down at the trunk of a tree. He waited, watched and listened, and finally, apparently satisfied, he approached closer to the house. There were lights in the house; all appeared open and as the boys say, "on the square."

There was a rear porch and Ike approached close to it, and after a time ascended and approached the window and peered in through the blinds. He beheld a well-furnished room; everything appeared all right; he saw nothing that he might not expect to find in a house of its seeming character. The gas was turned low; there were books on the table, a chair stood before it, and everything appeared as though ready for a master, or as it would appear if a master had temporarily gone away.

The lad did not see any one in the room, and finally he

proceeded to the hall window that opened on the porch and with little effort he succeeded in opening it, and then he stepped in, having previously, while in the garden, cast aside all but his supple suit. He was ready for business—ready for a struggle or a nimble escape.

The boy, as our readers know, could move around with the noiselessness of a cat, and he moved to the door of the room, which was open. He glanced in and, indeed, the room was vacant. He had a good chance to glance around; everything that he saw bore evidence of the occupancy of a physician engaged in considerable practice. He moved to the front room; all was dark there; the doors between the front and rear parlors were closed; he stepped into the room and carefully and very cautiously shot the gleam from his remarkable mask lantern around, and he was amazed and confused; there was nothing that came under his glance calculated to excite suspicion. He beheld an elegantly furnished parlor, but not fitted with any greater magnificence than one might expect to behold in a house of its pretensions.

Ike examined everything very carefully, and, as intimated, saw nothing to excite suspicion. He satisfied himself and then returned to the hall and ascended to the second floor, and with his usual care and precaution finally opened the door of a room. It was a handsomely furnished bedroom. He did not remain long in this room, but passed to the rear apartment. He found it furnished as were all the other rooms he had entered—fully in accordance and as one might expect in any first-class house. He ascended to the third floor, entered all the rooms there, and so on to the fourth floor, and nowhere had he seen a living soul, and in only one room was there a light burning, and that was in the rear parlor on the first floor. Ike finally descended the stairs and passed down to the basement; there were no servants in the house, no lights on the basement



floor, and yet everything he saw indicated a perfect equipment for housekeeping, but there didn't appear to be any housekeeping, and as Ike facetiously remarked:

"The house appears to be keeping itself."

Other speculations passed through the boy's mind. He had seen his man enter that house; there was evidence of the very recent occupancy of the rear parlor, and yet it was deserted; the gas was turned low; all looked orderly and correct, but there was no one in sight.

"This gets me," muttered the lad.

He sat down on the lower step of the front hall stairs and meditated. He said:

"This gets me. That man surely came into this house and he met a man here—the doctor. Now where are they? I have been in every room in the house. Those men must be on the roof or in the cellar. Hang it! why didn't I go down in the cellar! I will risk it now."

Ike was really perplexed and it did seem as though he ran from mystery to mystery.

With his usual caution he passed to the basement and then commenced an experiment displaying the real science of detective work. He found the door leading to the cellar, then he drew his mask lantern and flashed its strongest rays down on the floor, and his keen eyes glanced where the light flashes fell, and finally he ejaculated, but in a very low tone:

"Great Scott!"

Ike got down close to the floor and made a closer examination, and then he attempted to open the door; it was bolted on the inside toward the cellar stairs.

"Another proof," he muttered, and he added:

"Yes, Mister Man, you and the doctor are in the cellar."

The lad felt a little uncomfortable, and in a low tone he muttered:

"I fear this will lead to some horrible discovery, but I

cannot turn back; I must move and solve the mystery, no matter how horrible the discovery may be."

As stated, the door was locked on the inside and a difficulty was presented. Ike knew he could bore through and slide the bolt, but there might follow reasons why it would prove best to conceal the fact of any one's presence. He meditated awhile and then passed out to the rear yard. He had little difficulty in doing so as he was proceeding from the inside. Once in the yard he made an examination, and at once exclaimed, "Eureka!" He found a rear cellar grating, as he had expected, and it took but a moment to loose the fastenings and open it; then it became necessary to consider. He looked at his weapons. He had an idea that if he encountered any one it might be a desperate man brought to bay.

"I reckon there's no going back now," he muttered, and an instant later added:

"I wish Murray were here, but he is not, and I must go it alone. I wonder where I'll fetch up."

He raised the grating and leaning far over the edge peered down and finally let himself to the coal platform. He then "hunkied" until he could see into the cellar. All was dark and not a sound broke the stillness. He let himself down and stood in the cellar, and here again he stood and listened; then he drew his wonderful lamp and, as above stairs, he only beheld what one might expect to behold in the cellar of any ordinary house.

"Well," he muttered, "I am got again. I'll be shot with baked beans if I understand any part of this business. I am knocked out dead."

The lad moved along slowly holding his light, and he passed to the foot of the stairs leading down from the basement hall. At the foot of the stairs he made a careful examination. His wonderful lamp here did great work, for he was able to discern unmistakable imprints of



human feet, and he dropped to his hands and knees and followed very carefully until he came to a portion of the rear wall, and there he found an iron door; it was unlocked; he passed into a sort of vault dug out under the yard. The vault might have been used for almost any purpose. Here he commenced a study and found very singular evidences of some strange mystery, and finally he discovered indications of a closing to an opening.

To our readers it may all appear simple enough, but in fact it required great experience and shrewdness to make the several discoveries as Ike had succeeded in doing. He had little difficulty in effecting an entrance to the very close stone-lined passage in which he found himself after removing the obstruction, and here he came to a halt. He felt assured that the mystery of the absence of any occupants of the house was solved. He believed he was proceeding to a secret underground chamber, where he would find the man he was trailing, with the doctor also. He extinguished his lamp and proceeded with great caution until he had gone at least seventy-five feet, when he beheld the glimmer of a light, and he muttered:

"Here I am at last."

On he went with great caution, and after a little came to where he could glance into a room, and there he beheld the man he was shadowing, also another man with a pale, student-like face; but the surroundings in the room, as far as Ike could see them, were very startling indeed. He beheld skeletons ranged around on the walls and all manner of articles, retorts and instruments, such as one might expect to find in a chemist's laboratory.

Ike stood a moment in the passageway, but discovered that there was a sort of corridor or half-corridor around the chamber where the two men were sitting. The doctor was in working garb and appeared to be going on with his work, while the newcomer sat at a table talking. Both

men appeared to be cool and unconcerned as far as any fear of discovery was concerned.

Our hero crept forward and managed to gain a position outside the room near a sink, and he saw that the apartment was lighted with gas; seemingly it was well ventilated and there were water connections. We will here state, in order to save future explanations, that there was connection with the chimney of the building in the yard—the building Ike had passed when making his way to the rear of the house, and there was an opening between the room and the sink, and by getting down under this sink Ike could peep in, and had a full view of the room. He beheld many various, curious objects, and the uses of the most of them he well understood, for our hero was quite a skillful chemist himself. He saw nothing that might be called contraband—no evidences of any unlawful proceedings, and the only thing really out of the way was the secrecy of the workshop and the secret passages leading to it, and even that seeming mystery could easily be explained and accounted for. At that moment, however, it was the conversation of the two men that most interested our hero. He heard the doctor say in an impatient tone:

“All right, Shelton, if you wish to give up the scheme I am willing.”

“I don’t wish to give it up, but it appears I will be compelled to give it up.”

“That is your own affair.”

“I do not like the way you talk, doctor.”

“Why not?”

“It was you who got me into this scheme and all the money I had left I turned over to you. You have never made any accounting, but you say it has all gone for expenses. Now, I do not see what very extraordinary expenses you could have had.”

“Have you come here to upbraid me?”



"No, but if this matter fails you should return me some of the money I gave you; at least enough to return to Europe."

"I have no money to return; it has all gone for expenses."

"You have never given me an accounting."

"Do you think drugs cost nothing? Do you think experiments can be made without cost, and the care of the girl has cost me a large sum, and bribes have taken money. No, I have no money to return, and furthermore I do not wish you to say that I got you into this scheme. I did not. You proposed it to me and I agreed to aid you. I agreed to produce the corpse and the proofs of death after you had effected all the insurances on the party. You succeeded."

"Yes, I succeeded."

"What is the total amount of the insurance?"

"One hundred thousand dollars."

"And you have all the witnesses?"

"Yes."

"And I am prepared to do my part of it. I never played a better game in my life. I have reputable witnesses to come forward and testify as to the cause of death when the death takes place. My end of it is all right and we can easily secure the hundred thousand dollars."

"But I tell you some one is on our track."

"Oh, you are a nervous fellow."

"No, I am not a nervous fellow, and I believe that in following your advice I attracted notice to our doings. You told me to secure the other girl so there would be no possible witness against us, and in attempting to secure her I have drawn upon us this espionage."

"I did advise you to secure the other girl after you refused to let *your own daughter go through the ordeal*. I warned you then that we were taking great risks, but you

fears prompted you to insist upon getting some one else for me to make a corpse of, and when you met that girl who resembled your daughter in such a remarkable manner you became crazy. You seized her and I consented that she should become our subject, then you were not contented; you insisted upon getting possession of the other girl, and now you come and tell me we are 'shadowed.' If we are it is your fault, but I have one more fact to tell you: the girl whom you abducted and delivered over to me is really dead. I did not tell you the facts. I told you I had all the witnesses. Now, I tell you she is really dead and I have been preserving her body, expecting every day you would be ready. As you have given up the scheme I shall consign her body to the tomb. Poor, beautiful girl—grief and terror killed her, and I regret ever having engaged in the scheme."

Ike overheard every word of this really thrilling dialogue, and he perceived just what the game had been. It was a great deal to defraud an insurance company, or several companies possibly, and when the man announced that their victim was dead Ike concluded that he alluded to beautiful Rose Inness, and he felt like springing out upon the two men and wreaking vengeance upon them then and there.

The conversation continued. The man Shelton proved he was no fool. He had been engaged in a criminal undertaking and that had unmanned him, but when it was decided that the criminal proceedings were to cease his original nerve and courage returned. One other explanation came to Ike. He recalled how Murray had attempted to follow Shelton after Ike tossed him over the embankment. He recalled how Shelton had given Murray the slip and how he had met several men all dressed alike, as Murray said. Ike's solution of this mystery was that Murray had lost track of his man from the start and in



some singularly remarkable and coincident manner had got mixed in some other game. Our hero concluded that Shelton had really nothing to do with the seven men. While revolving the above in his mind Ike was listening to the continued dialogue between the two men.

"So you say the girl is dead?"

"Yes."

"I doubt your word."

"You do?"

"Yes, I do."

"Very well; that is your privilege."

The doctor was very cool. He appeared to be one of those cold-blooded, impassive men whom nothing could disconcert.

"I think I see your game," said Shelton.

"Oh, you do."

"Yes, I do."

"Well."

"You have discovered there is a reward offered for the girl. You are going to take the reward."

"That is your opinion?"

"Yes."

"You have a right to your opinion, and now I will excuse you. I am very busy to-night."

"I will not go until you return my money."

"I have no money belonging to you."

"You have."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Expose you unless you return it."

"You will expose me?"

"Yes."

"What have you to expose?"

"I can lead the police to this apartment."

"Well, do so; there is nothing unlawful about my having a laboratory here. I am infringing no health requirements.

I am on my own grounds. Go and show the police. I will lead them to my workshop after you have brought them to the house, but look out for yourself or you will never return to France. You forget that I can retaliate, and for you there is no escape. You are guilty of abduction, and as the girl is dead you may be held for murder. I have taken care to have witnesses to the fact that you brought the girl to me for treatment for nervous trouble. I can prove I knew nothing about her until you brought her to me, and as I have never had anything to say to the insurance companies I may prove to them that you were putting up a fraud on them, and that you attempted to make me a party with you, and I have arranged everything so that I can easily prove everything; so, Mr. Shelton, you must go very slow or you may run up against a snag."

"Credo, you are a devil."

"Yes, a devil, but not the devil."

"You and I cannot quarrel."

"No, it will not be wise for us to quarrel."

"What shall I do?"

"Do you ask my advice?"

"Yes."

"Return to France."

"I have not the means."

"Oh! you can raise the passage money."

"I cannot; you will at least advance me the passage money."

"No."

"I may anticipate you."

"Anticipate me?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"I may earn the reward."

"What reward?"

"There is a reward for the discovery of the girl whom we abducted."



"No; whom you abducted. I had no hand in the abduction."

"I can spoil your game."

"Oh, do not threaten!"

"I am becoming desperate."

"Possibly, yes."

"I may resolve to kill myself."

"A good plan."

"You think so?"

"Yes."

"You may change your mind."

"Oh! yes."

"Especially, when I tell you that I may leave evidence of your guilt behind me, to be used when I am beyond all fear of punishment in this world. Remember, doctor, I have one last resort—the resource left to desperate men who have been betrayed."

"Come, Shelton, have we not had wrangle enough?"

"There is nothing else left to me."

"Yes, there is."

"What?"

"You are resolved to kill yourself."

"I am."

"Act like a man first."

"How?"

"Go on with your scheme. Go to the companies and announce the death of your daughter. We will show up the corpse. There may be a lawsuit, but in the end we must win, or failing that, when indeed all hope is gone, we can both die a quiet and easy death; and I will furnish the way and means. Come, be a man; let's go on and get that hundred thousand dollars; suppose people are on your track! Our game has been played well. We can defy them all. We can put a bold face on the whole matter. We can hold our own against all odds and in the end get

the money. Just think of it! fifty thousand apiece in hard cash. You need money—I need money. We have gone so far the money is at hand, no matter if there are a thousand people on your track.”

“Doctor, if you were only a square man.”

“I am a square man, but I saw you were in a desperate mood, and I thought it a good thing to stir you up a little; and now listen—even at the last moment you need not kill yourself.”

“I’d rather die than be penniless.”

“You will not be penniless. If we fail I know a way to get money—enough for all of us to escape to Europe; but we will not fail. Our plans are too well arranged. You have grown nervous, that’s all. Our plans are perfect. Go ahead to the end, as you have done thus far, and we are sure to gain the hundred thousand dollars.”

Shelton appeared to meditate and after a moment he said:

“Doctor, you gave me a great shock.”

“I find shocks very useful at times to stir men up.”

“And you really only intended to stir me up.”

“That was all.”

“And you do not mean to prove false to me?”

“A man is not false who is trying to gain one hundred thousand dollars; but tell about this shadowing.”

Shelton proceeded and related all that had occurred and when he had concluded the doctor said:

“I can see through it all.”

“You can?”

“Yes.”

“And do you not perceive my danger?”

“No.”

“Explain.”

“They are looking for the girl you abducted, and in some way they have fallen to you as the abductor.”



"But how could they fall to me?"

"You are very stupid."

"How?"

"You were seeking to secure the other girl, so as to get her out of the way, and she has discovered the fact and has got detectives to trail you. They are not on to our scheme at all. They are merely seeking to find the missing girl, that's all; and you have been unnecessarily scared."

"Doctor, I believe you are right."

"Certainly I am right."

"Then you advise me to go right ahead?"

"Yes."

"But you told me the girl was really dead."

"So much the better for us. Don't you see if she is dead they can never find her, and you can use your daughter as a foil in case these people become troublesome; no trouble to establish your daughter's identity."

"That will bring the companies on to us."

"No, no, you can establish that the dead girl was your daughter, but mark—one word—do not bother any more about the other girl."

"And how will we manage matters?"

"Come here to-morrow night and I will show you the dead body, and in the meantime you can announce the death to the insurance companies; they will go and verify, and then will follow the witnesses in case they dispute. I will have three certificates as to the cause of death. Shelton, we can get that hundred thousand dollars easy; it may take time—yes, they may think there are suspicious circumstances, and may make a fight; they will have only *suspicious*—we will have *proofs*."

"Then I am to see you to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"Come here."

"You do not wish me to go to Madeleine's house?"

"No, come here."

"And we will proceed together?"

"Yes."

"All right; I will be here."

"Now go, and leave me to my work."

Ike had overheard enough. He had all the points, and he got along that passage in a nimble manner, and, indeed, he had thrown the flash-light on one of the most diabolical schemes ever conceived in a great city to gain a large sum of money. He got to the cellar and passed out through the open grate, and soon got to the street. He had the bearings of the house down all right, so he went to the street over the rear fence, and then almost on a run he hastened to meet Murray. He found a note from Murray requesting him to go to a certain place. Ike proceeded and found the detective awaiting him. He had no time to tell all he had learned, but was dumfounded when Murray said to him:

"Ike, Madge has been abducted."

"Madge has been abducted?" ejaculated Ike.

"Yes."

"How did it occur?"

"It appears she had some startling information for me, and started to come to me. She did not reach me."

"And why are you waiting here?"

"I expect information."

"From whom?"

"Arthur Budd."

"He is on to something?"

"Yes, his wife fell to a suspicion; her husband came home and he went straight on the trail. He may have something for us."

Even as Murray spoke a man came along. He gave



Murray some very startling information, the detective said, as soon as his informant had moved away:

"Ike, we have a great lay on hand; are you ready?"

"I am."

"All ready for a big fight?"

"Yes, cap, always ready."

"Then here goes. Come, it's only a chance, but I think we are on the right lay. We may be thrown off, but I've got a dozen men out. We will have that girl before daylight yet, if human ingenuity and quickness count."

Ike and Murray crossed to Brooklyn and by car proceeded to East New York, and from there to Canarsie, and from there they chartered a big boat and were soon sailing out on the bay, and within twenty minutes the captain of their boat pointed to a sloop coming through the inlet.

"By ginger, Ike," said Murray, "we are on the right track."

He gave orders to his captain and when the sloop ran in to the shore on the bay side, near Rockaway, Murray and Ike saw them and they saw, or believed they saw, as far as the search through the night would permit, a sight which told them that indeed they were on the right track.

The boat in which Ike and Murray sailed was run to the shore and the two detectives sprang out—actually wading to the beach in their eagerness, and they trailed like sleuth hounds until they came to a house that stood alone not more than three hundred yards from the beach.

"Here we are, Ike."

"Yes, sir."

"How many men did you see, Ike?"

"Three."

"No more?"

"No more."

"That answers to my count. They are desperate fel-

lows; they will turn like rats, Ike. I have thought matters over. I cannot endanger your life. I will go alone into that house."

"Will you?"

"Yes, Ike, I will."

"Not this morning, cap, some other morning."

The house was closed, but a light gleamed from what may be called the kitchen. Murray and Ike did not stop to knock at the door, but with one powerful kick Murray sent it crashing in, and he leaped into the low-ceiled room; one man sat before the fireplace filled with blazing logs.

"Hello! cap," cried Murray, "good-evening."

"How dare you dash in my door that way!"

"We were in a hurry, pop."

"You will pay for that door."

"That's all right, pop, but you have some visitors to-night?"

"You lie!" came the defiant response, in a savage tone.

"Here! here! no nonsense."

"I am alone here. I am always alone. I do not entertain people here, and if you fellows are on a lark you must go somewhere else. You can't get anything here."

"Don't waste time, cap; where are your visitors?"

"I tell you there is no one here; do you understand me?"

Ike pointed to a trap-door.

"There they are, cap," he said.

"Raise it," called Murray.

The old man rose to his feet, seized a gun and cried:

"Hands off there! don't raise that trap!"

The next instant the old man lay bleeding on the floor with a gash in his head from Murray's club, and at the same instant Ike grasped the ring of the trap-door and up came the cover, disclosing an opening and a dark space below.



## CHAPTER X.

IKE AND MURRAY HAVE A SHARP FIGHT WITH THE AIR  
OF A FLASH-LIGHT.

WE will here state that we have not gone into details of the pursuit. It is sufficient to inform our readers that Murray and Ike knew just what they were about when they plunged through the dashed-down door into that cabin, and when the opening was disclosed the elder detective said:

"Stand aside, Ike, and let me go down."

Ike did not obey, but without a word he dashed down through the darkness without any regard to step or ladder. As it proved, there was neither steps nor ladder to impede his descent. As he struck bottom, as the swimmers say, he called out:

"All right, cap, let her come."

Down dashed Murray and as he struck bottom he called:

"Now, Ike, flash your light."

Ike cast a bomb to the floor. It was an article of his own manufacture. As has been intimated, he was a wonder in the use of chemicals, and in his genius for various devices. As the bomb struck the floor there shone on the underground apartment a bright light of a peculiar color and dazzling brilliancy, and a very thrilling and startling tableau was revealed. At the further end of the cellar were three men. The light had come so suddenly the wretches were dazed; on the floor lay the form of a girl, and Murray stood with a cocked revolver leveled on his arm. He certainly had the call.

As stated, it was a very thrilling and startling tableau. The men cowered, with their hands uplifted to shut off

the glare from the bomb; one of the men leaned over the girl, or had been so leaning when the flash came, and he crouched in an attitude of amazement.

As the light flashed one of the men in a hoarse, husky voice cried out:

"Don't shoot; we surrender."

"Down with you on your faces," cried Murray; "down, I say, or I'll blow every one of you into eternity."

One of the men held a pistol in his hand and another a knife, but they were not of the same stuff as the terrible man who confronted them, and besides Murray had had experience; a scrimmage to him was an old exercise.

The men appeared to comprehend, and down they dropped on their faces. Indeed, the situation did not admit of any palaver; the men knew it was down or fight or die; they preferred to go down and they did. Then Murray said:

"If you fellows are not principals in this abduction you may be all right;" and turning to Ike he said:

"Clap the darbies on 'em, Ike."

Ike did as commanded and then our hero advanced to glance at the insensible girl. Ike had drawn his wonderful lamp and its light was flashed square on the girl's pallid features.

"It's Madge," said Ike.

"Yes, it's Madge; fortunately for her she is unconscious."

"She has been drugged," said Ike.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir, no mistake."

"What had we better do?"

"Get her out in the fresh air as soon as possible."

The detective did not appear to mind the three men any more than he would have regarded so many eager rats. He caught the girl in his arms and Ike ran to the opening.



The lad made a spring and an instant later was in the kitchen where the old man still lay, either insensible or pretending to be. Murray hauled up the girl and Ike carried her to the open air, and as he always carried certain antidotes with him he determined to experiment, hoping to restore her to consciousness, but his efforts were not needed, as the girl began to show signs of returning consciousness, and Ike said to Murray, who had joined him:

"She is coming around all right."

"Good enough; you attend to her and I will see what I can make out of those scoundrels down there in the cellar."

"We may learn something from Madge."

"That's all right; but I've more to learn from those rascals below there."

Murray returned to the cellar and Ike continued his efforts to bring Madge around to consciousness.

After a time the girl appeared to shake off the effects of the drug; Ike had given her a stimulus and when she opened her eyes and pleaded:

"Oh, please have mercy," our hero said:

"You are all right, Madge, I am Ike."

The announcement appeared to put new life into the girl; she started up and gazed, and then exclaimed:

"Is it possible I have been dreaming?"

"No, Madge, you were not dreaming; it is a terrible reality, but you are all right now."

"What happened? did we have an earthquake, a cyclone, or was the house on fire?"

"Calm yourself and I will tell you all about it."

"I am safe now?"

"You are as safe as an oyster in its shell at the bottom of the ocean."

"Then tell me all about it."

Ike did tell the girl that she had been abducted, that he and Murray had got on to the track of the abductors and

that it was all right now. He went into full details and as the girl more completely revived she began to comprehend the situation.

"Now tell me," said Ike, "what befell you."

"It is as a dream to me, Ike."

"Well, you remember up to the time the dream commenced."

"Yes, now I recall."

"Then tell me all about it."

"I discovered that the men had trailed me down to my new home. I determined to go and inform Mr. Murray. I started out and had gone but a few steps when I was seized and then became unconscious. I remember no more until I found myself here and you leaning over me."

"Well, it's all right now; strange incidents have occurred."

"And have you solved the mystery?"

"No, but we are well on its track; one part of it is solved. I have not yet had time even to tell Murray. You shall learn it all later on, and now how do you feel?"

"I begin to feel all right. Where are we, Ike?"

"Oh, we are in an outlandish place, but daylight is coming on and we will soon return to the city and you will be safe. You need not fear another abduction, and you would not have been captured this time if you had obeyed orders."

"I thought it was important for Mr. Murray to know immediately that the men had discovered my abiding place."

"That is all right, but you should have sent some one to inform him. You should not have attempted to do so yourself, but all's well that ends well."

While Ike was talking to and consoling Madge, Murray was having his turn with the three fellows who had accomplished the abduction. He returned to the cellar, and



with Ike's flash-light illuminated the place. He had the men at his mercy, having even put the handcuffs on the old man whom he had knocked over by the fireplace. He asked:

"Which one of you rascals is the leader?"

One of the men answered:

"We have no leader. I am the guide and general director."

"Well, I've got you fellows in a bad scrape."

"Oh, no; it will be all right when matters are explained. No harm can come to us."

"Is that so?"

"That is so."

"Then you fellows can work up an abduction without any fear of consequences?"

"It wasn't no abduction."

"Oh! it was only a picnic."

"See here, captain, you don't understand it. You are all right. We've got no action against you because you are an officer, but we haven't committed any crime, and when the explanation comes we have nothing to fear. You have been fooled, that's all."

"I have been fooled, eh?"

"Yes."

"Who by?"

"Well, that's to be found out."

"And you fellows did not commit a crime?"

"No."

"Suppose you explain to me."

"We were acting under orders."

"You were."

"Yes."

"Who issued the orders?"

"The girl's father."

"Oh, her father, eh?"

"Yes."

"And you think I have been fooled?"

"Yes."

"You fellows will all go to jail for a long term. You are the chaps who have been fooled. The man who set you to do this job is not the girl's father."

"Eh! are you sure of that?"

"I am."

"Well, he made it appear that he was."

"That will not save you fellows, but you can save yourselves."

"How?"

"Put me on to the pretended father who put up this job."

"We can do that."

"You were to be paid for this job?"

"Yes."

"How much?"

"Two hundred and fifty."

"The man won't pay you now."

"Well, I suppose you know and we are out our time."

"You can escape the penalty of your crime on one condition, and also get the two hundred and fifty."

"How?"

"Prove your story."

"Prove that the girl's father employed us?"

"Yes."

"I can prove he pretended to be her father."

"That will answer, but you can do it in one way only. He can never pay you and your only chance now is to give him away."

"We'll do it."

"Will you work in with me to do it?"

"Yes, I will."



"Now mind, if you attempt any didos you are a gone chicken."

"Oh, I am an old hand at the business. I know when I've got a dead set back, but I will convince you. We thought we were all right and committing no crime."

"Do that and you are all right, and you shall get your two hundred and fifty from me in good hard money."

"I will put you on to the man who employed us."

"That is all I want, old man." Ike led the fellow upstairs, but still kept him handcuffed, although there really was no need, as he was too much for the abductor under any circumstances.

Once upstairs Murray consulted with Ike. After having exchanged a few words with Madge he said:

"My lad, we've done a good night's work. I believe we are on to the whole business."

"Your end of it, that's all, cap. I've a revelation to make that will make even an old-timer like you open your eyes."

"I will return to the city, Ike, but I will leave you here to watch two of these rogues until I can send you word."

"What will we do with Madge?"

"She shall go with me."

"How long must I remain here?"

"Daylight is coming apace. Two hours after I have left you here you can follow me."

"Shall I release those fellows?"

"No, let them work out of their cuffs themselves."

Murray explained to Ike, and then taking Madge and the fellow who was guide and general director, he went to the boat.

Ike knew he could leave the place by train some hours later and he was content.

A stiff breeze was blowing and Murray with Madge made a quick passage across the bay. On the way over he

talked with Madge and also listened to some strange and startling revelations from his prisoner. The story will be revealed to our readers as we open up the details attending the solution of the complicated mystery.

Later, the detective arrived in New York, and on the strength of the information he had received from his prisoner he determined to await the return of Ike, who he knew would be in the city some little time following his own arrival.

Madge had been returned to her home and was informed that she need have no fear, as the abductors were now themselves abducted, as the detective put it. In due time Ike arrived. He went direct to Murray's home and there found the detective, who held his man a prisoner. The fellow appeared to consent to be held and offered no protest. He had been informed that if he made his story good all would be right for him, and the fellow acted as though he felt assured that he could make his story good.

When Ike returned he related to the detective his own experiences, and Murray was compelled to exclaim:

"Well, Ike, this has been the case of my life. It has been a comedy of errors or rather a complication of crimes through mistakes, and now here we have it: Some man, the man whom we will 'be on to' in a few hours, is anxious to capture Rose Inness, and these men in stealing Madge away really believed they were capturing Rose. These men had nothing to do with the fellow Shelton. Did you ever hear of such a singular mixture of crimes and such a strange fate for one very pretty girl to be mixed up in?"

"Have you learned any of the facts connected with Rose?"

"No, I have only learned that some mysterious individual, who claims to be her father, has been desirous to secure possession of her—for what reason I do not know. Neither do I know the relation he bears to her; and



while he has been seeking to abduct her for one purpose. Shelton has really abducted her on her resemblance to his daughter. The whole affair is mixed, but we will untangle the web."

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## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCLUSION.

It had been arranged for Darb, the man who was guide and general director of the party of abductors who had been so cleverly captured in the old house at Rockaway, to meet the man who had employed him. He did so, and Ike was at hand and overheard the whole conversation. The dialogue would prove of little interest to our readers, and we will only say that Ike discovered that the man who had arranged the abduction of Madge really believed he was abducting Rose Inness. He had succeeded in trailing Rose to her home and then had pointed her out to her abductors. At the time she was veiled. The abductors lay around and saw Madge, who was also veiled; they got on her trail and still believing it was Rose hung upon her track from place to place until they succeeded. The whole affair was a blunder and one that could have easily occurred. The man Henning believed it was Rose who had been captured when he was talking with Darb, the abductor, and it was finally arranged that on the following day Darb was to lead Henning into the presence of the girl who, he claimed, was his daughter.

Having all the points Ike returned and met Murray and related to him the result of his "shadow," saying:

"The man Henning is not an experienced rogue; he is

a guardian or relative who has made up his mind to rob Rose. He can be easily settled after we get possession of the girl, and he shall have an interview to-morrow, I reckon, and we will have a great surprise for him, or my calculations will all go astray; that's all."

At the hour named Ike was on hand at the residence of Dr. Credo. Murray and one other detective were also at hand. Shelton arrived on time and a little later Credo and his partner came forth, and Ike fell to their trail. The men proceeded but a short distance and entered a very respectable-appearing house. Ike gave a signal and Murray and his partner came.

"Now is our time," said Ike; "we've got 'em; let's strike while the iron is hot."

The men went to the house openly. Ike rang the bell; the door was opened by Dr. Credo in person; the man looked scared when he saw the men at the door; the latter did not stand on ceremony but forced their way in. Murray seized the doctor and had the irons on him in no time; the other detective went into the parlor and there met Shelton. The latter attempted to draw a pistol. He had fallen to the situation partially. He was too late, however; a club knocked the weapon from his grasp.

While the incidents described were in progress Ike had started through the house. He entered the front room on the second floor and on a bed lay a human form, and curtains were drawn around it. He peeped in and flashed his light and took in the situation. Credo was playing a game. He had utilized a certain Indian secret for making the girl temporarily appear like a corpse. Ike was well up on the Indian mysteries, and had suspected all along that such a trick would be played, especially after overhearing the talk between Shelton and Credo. He had the antidote. He knew it would take an hour to bring the girl around to a normal condition. He ran downstairs, directed Murray what to do, and then returned to the room.



The two rogues were well secured; Murray left the house and in less than an hour he returned; Madge was with him. To the girl the detective had explained the whole situation, and she was fully prepared to act her part.

Madge was led up to the room. She glanced at the sleeping beauty and at once exclaimed:

"Yes, it is Rose."

"Sure," responded Ike. He directed Madge what to do and left her alone with the victim of a fatal resemblance.

An hour passed and Madge summoned Ike to the room. She met him outside the door, and Ike asked:

"Has she come round?"

"Yes, she has been all right for three-quarters of an hour. She revived very shortly after you left me with her. I have explained everything to her and she is now prepared to tell her story."

Murray was summoned. Rose, looking beautiful, was sitting in a big easy-chair. After being introduced to the noble men who had done her such great service she thanked them and then told them her story. She said:

"My tale is a simple one. My father was an invalid. He came from California. He had a large sum of money deposited in a bank up the country when he died. After his death the president of that bank sought to force me to marry him, and then he started some very wicked stories about me. With the connivance of the cashier of the bank I drew all the ready money and fled. The cashier did not know it was my intention to run away. I was terrorized because that man told me terrible stories about my father. At the time I was abducted I had been to the post-office to get a letter from the cashier, to whom after a long time I had written. When I read his letter I saw how needlessly I had been terrified, and had determined to return home, when I was seized, thrust into a carriage and hurried to this house, where I have been kept under the care of a woman, and a doctor attended upon me. They told me I had been found unconscious in the street, and promised as soon as I was restored to health they would communicate with my friends. From day to day they tem-

porized with me, and from what Madge has told me I am satisfied I have been constantly under the influence of some subtle drug."

The mystery was explained and, as usually happens, it was a simple affair after all.

Rose was taken to the house where Madge resided, and on the following morning Darb, acting under instructions, led Henning to the house to show him his victim. The man was left in a room and a few moments later Rose entered.

We will not repeat all the man said, but in the midst of a threat Murray, Ike, and Madge walked into the room, followed by Darb. Henning was dead beat.

A conference followed, and for the sake of Rose it was determined to let Henning resign from the bank, and go to Europe for a year or two for the benefit of his health. He was a man of some means but an avaricious scoundrel.

One more explanation: Later revelations disclosed the fact that Grace Shelton was really a cousin of Rose Inness. Shelton was not a bad man. He had lost a fortune and had come under the influence of Credo, who had led him on to attempt the crime of robbing life insurance companies, and strange enough Rose was able to communicate facts to Shelton, who was really innocent, which led to his coming into possession of ten thousand dollars, and for reasons good enough, under all the circumstances, it was agreed not to prosecute him; but Credo received a warning which made it appear to him that in the near future he had better transfer his operations to some other city.

Ike accompanied Rose back to her home, and we will add in passing, that later on she became the wife of the young cashier who had connived at her withdrawal of funds from the bank. Ike and Murray were well rewarded for their services, and Madge received a munificent present in money.

When all was arranged and settled Ike said to Murray:

"Well, cap, we will never have a more complicated case, nor one that will be solved so satisfactory and in such a simple manner."

"You are right," said Murray. And here we end our narrative.



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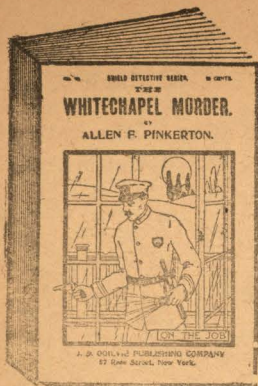


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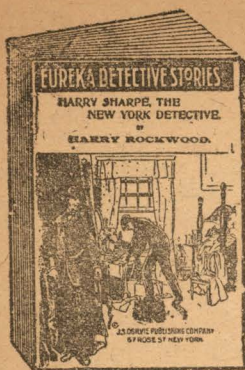
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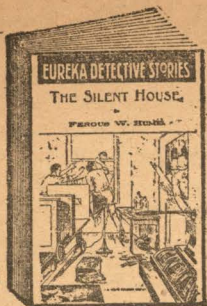
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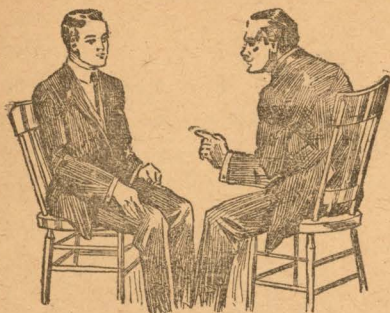
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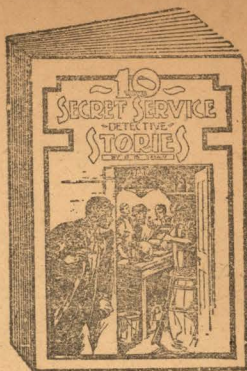
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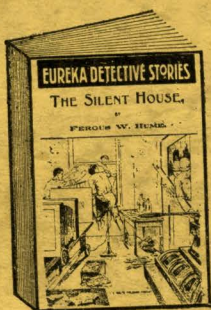
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